

MY JOURNEY.

BY CAROLINE S. WHITMARSH.

Do you like traveling alone? I speak to my own sex. Then I wish you had my share of the pleasure! To be alone with books and writing, alone in a garden, alone with one's best friend is heaven itself, if you wish; but to go straying off alone on a journey, frightened by cars, confused by stations, puzzled by changes, oblivious of baggage, is one of the disciplines of life, or I'm no judge!

Listen to what befell not a week ago. Wishing to pass a long day with a friend in the rural districts, I set forth in a glorious snow-storm the afternoon before, driving comfortably to the station, and, seated in the car, chatted quietly with friends, till the iron demon shrieked and plunged away from them, bearing me on alone.

But a short journey lay before me, some forty miles. I should reach my destination by dusk, and drive from the station with other friends—what was easier? Tranquilly enough I glanced at the faces of my fellow passengers, as one would run up and down the columns of a newspaper; and finding them neither familiar nor strikingly interesting—no poet's corner, laughter-waking paragraph, or thrilling tale among them—I turned to watch the snow, wiping the steamy window lightly with my fur cuff, and sending fancies, airy, vague, aimless, like themselves, to float among the floating flakes outside.

How time flies, and space vanishes when we are dreaming, especially if the dream occur in a railway car! We paused, the locomotive giving a shriek extraordinary, passengers rushing toward the door as if that moment were their last, and the conductor announcing that such as were bound for a list of towns, Northboro' among them, must change cars, at once.

I tranquilly turned to my snow-flakes, rejoicing over fresh air which came in at open doors, a luxury like nectar in that close stove-heat. It flashed through my mind to ask if I, bound for Southboro', ought not to follow those going Northboro'ward; then I thought how like a woman it was to inquire if North didn't mean South; and, with some complacency, resolved to be wiser than my sex.

Alas! ever since Eve, wisdom has been the commencement of troubles! It grew darker,

all my brushing at the window-pane would not remove the dimness outside; the conductor came with his lantern to examine my ticket for the dozenth time, punch in it the dozenth round hole, and then to start in dismay, exclaiming, "Why, you are altogether out-of-your-way, going to the wrong point of the compass," and, glancing at the empty seat beside me, "you are alone!"

This was agreeable, but perhaps from consciousness of a natural tendency in that direction, I dislike nervous women, and asked as tranquilly as though his words had not thrown me into a fever of fear how the mistake could be remedied.

In no way, immediately; at the small country stations there would be no vehicles for private conveyance. I must find my way through the storm to some tavern at the next stopping, and pass the night there—alone.

It is instructive to observe how a little determination will change the minds of others with regard to can and cannot. In few words my friend was convinced that stop over night at a country tavern I would not, and go to Southboro' I would, in sleigh, or carriage, or on my feet. Looking in my face, and thinking, doubtless, what willful sprites women are, he allowed that if I must go, I must, and, on the whole, could, by traveling a few stations farther, and then making a search for sleighs.

So with fatherly kindness he stood over me, lantern in hand, led me out at length into the storm, and consigned me to a tall, taciturn lad, whom I followed into a station, empty, cold, and dark. The tall lad began poking vigorously at one of those lobster-like coal stoves, without kindling aught, except a very lively aching in my head. I besought him to desist and procure me a sleigh. Looking alarmed as if I could bite him, he faltered forth his first words, that "Mr. Willard was not here yet, and, as for himself, he didn't know—anything." A very just opinion, I concluded.

Do you like traveling alone? Presently Mr. Willard came, knocking the snow from his boots, and talking volubly enough to make up for his deputy's silence. "Where was I going in Southberry? Oh! he knew the Billingses,

they had a sight of company come in the cars: why hadn't they sent a carriage for me? Left over? that was too bad, passengers left thus every few days: he was saying the directions at Framingham were not explicit enough—and yet, no offence! 'Most every one would know that Northberry must mean Southberry also. Had I come far? From Boston! Then he supposed I went to the monster ball the night previous, Gilmores'—he hadn't seen me there, but you don't notice faces so much in a crowd."

When he paused for breath, I ventured once more on the subject of private conveyances. "Hardest thing in the world to find," he assured me; "a boy had already been sent to the stable, but that was locked; it was always locked, or the vehicles out of order; he would try again; and—Miss Willard would be waiting supper: could I excuse him for awhile?"

He went, the deputy had gone, a big dog growled in a corner; and the room was filled with smoke from a kerosene lamp: this I continued to screw down, and with difficulty pushed a window open for ventilation; then moved a chair toward the stove, which, crackling now within, seemed somewhat companionable. Dear Zimmerman, solitude is better in books than railway stations!

Fire always tranquilizes and makes us philosophical. I watched red coals drop into the ashes beneath and go out, and considered how thus, all life through, red-hot hearts of youth were dropping into the gray of years, and going out. Then I thought how little, three hours ago, I had dreamed of being in such a predicament as the present, and how evenly heaven's compensations fell to us all. Three hours ago, asleep on a silken sofa, with a frescoed ceiling above; two hours ago, driving in town screened from the snow so tenderly, chatting so merrily with friends the best on earth—none better up in heaven! and now in perplexity and danger, cold, hungry, *alone*. It was just, I felt even there. Why should I grow languid and dreamy amidst silken sofas, and gain no strength from the sweet uses of adversity?

I inspected the room. What uneven eyes fall sometimes to a mortal lot! In the somewhat ambitious and well-kept furniture, not a single piece stood in right relations with its surroundings: the railroad maps, the clock, and some evergreen wreaths, hung askew between the doors, and at unequal distances from the ceiling; with a perceptible attempt at order, the sofa stood one-sidedly between the windows; the chairs were all at zig-zags; the lobster-like stove was neither at the side nor in centre

of the room; the lamp was one-sided and threw one-sided shadows. But lo! at one side came in my friend Mr. Willard, and I forgave his eyes and every other sin, as indiscriminately as any well-paid priest his penitent.

The town, if I believed him, had been searched, and never a vehicle found, except an open baggage-wagon, which, of course, he declined, not wishing to send "one of Mr. Billingses' folks" so far in that style. To express regret was ungracious, but I implored that any future conveyance, of whatever sort, might be secured; I would ride in a wheelbarrow rather than wait.

Another messenger arrived—the deputy; and there followed a call to the adjoining room, a whispering and a stir, which made me fear they were letting slip some new opportunity. My dread of fussiness gone, I flew to the door, and found my suspicions just. An old chaise stood there, very high and creaky, the veritable one-horse shay of the professor, you would think. "Should Mr. Billingses' friend go in a rattle-trap like that—unsafe too—such a night as this?" the depot-master asked, with dramatic fervor. He was resolved as Coriolanus; but what man cannot be managed by a little honest pathos? Putting my hand on the sleeve of his shaggy coat, he felt through the shag—how timidly, and looking in his eyes—I give the recipe for others' use—I said, "Oh! yes, you will let me have my way. The chaise is safe enough, and I'm tired, and hungry, and frightened, and out of all manner of patience." He did not reply, for I had sprung into the chaise, and it only was left him to wrap the buffalo-robe about me and wish me a pleasant journey.

Off we drove into the darkness and snow. The storm was full in our faces, but it was so blessed to be started, at length, on my way toward Southboro'! The snow clogged the chaise wheels, till they dragged, shook, creaked, screeched across it, in a way to keep before me, that my head still ached in the most approved manner. What mattered it since I was not traveling alone?

How then? We were entering a long road which, we could dimly see, led through woods—who was this man I had taken for companion? I turned quickly to look, for the first time, at his face. It was too dark—some bushy, black hair I distinguished, and the rest a mere image of snow.

Perhaps I could find him out by his voice. "The country around here was thinly settled," I observed. "Yes, and especially along this road, which was a new one." That news brought little comfort. I began to wish that

my watch had been left with the good-natured depot-master; as for my purse, it never yet was full enough to cause apprehensions; and, as for the rest, I felt that, if need were, I could wither him with a touch—in times of emergency an inward strength comes always to our rescue, if we will but trust it.

If! The storm still beat about us; the lights from scattered farm-houses seemed farther off; the woods were denser, the roads worse clogged, and the old chaise creaked more musically. There was a silence in which I had time to reflect: What if the depot-master's hesitation had been caused by doubt of the driver, not the vehicle! and a hundred other what ifs and whys showered into my mind like snow-flakes, till I felt my courage and confidence going out like lamps, and wished—it is such a convenient wish—that I were safe in heaven!

The man spoke now, and his voice reassured me—it was respectful, even timid. Had it snowed in Boston that morning? Glad to escape from my thoughts, I gave him a detailed account of the climate, roads, and vehicles about my home. The latter topic awoke him thoroughly, and he soon showed the depths of his knowledge, compared with the shallowness of mine. Did you ever listen, in entire darkness, to a strange voice? It has as much individuality as a face: every new inflexion reveals a turn of character, or deeply-seated habit. Some voices are violins, some jew-harps, some hand-organs, and some mere wood or stone, that give no vibration, only an echo back. You may learn how much the talker has

felt, thought, experimented; how deep or shallow he is; how honest his speech and ways; or how prevaricating. And you learn the difference in human souls; the range of that scale of knowledge, sensation, enjoyment, which runs through all being, "from Newton to the oyster." My driver was no Newton, nor Byron, nor Burns; but an honest countryman, unhappy in that his soul was asleep, happy in that he could not be haunted by doubts, or deeply stung by suffering.

"Tranquil voice, and lip, and eye,
Quiet live, and easy die."

We reached "the Billingses'" door, two snow-images in a chaise of snow, its very creaking muffled out of sound. A ring brought lights to the porch, exclamations, inquiries, rejoicings; and it was very like the end of some old fairy tale, when, unfolding my snowy wrappings, they led me into the dazzling dining-room, where a snowy table stood glistening with silver; a broad wood fire blazed up the chimney; and voices, young and old, filled with their friendly talk, till it seemed but too short—the half hour of waiting for supper. I was no longer *alone*!

But let me close this veracious history with a word of glorification over our dear Americans. Where else in the world could a lone woman have passed through such adventures, everywhere sympathized with, befriended, sent grateful on her way? With conductor, deputy, depot-master, and chaise-man, the unvaried kindness and respect. Peace to them; prosperous be their journeys; long and pleasant the after rest!

THE RULING PASSION.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

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CHAPTER XX.

WHILE the assembly within the minister's house was in that wild state which follows an event which no one thoroughly understands, Joshua Leonard came in from the orchard, where he had been superintending a swing, on which some of the little folks had been amusing themselves, till the twinkle of a star or two between the apple tree boughs warned them that night was coming on.

As the strong man came in, anxious glances were cast upon him, and the whispers that had been running from group to group were hushed.

"Ah!" he said, all in a glow of cheerfulness, won from his kindly exercise among the children, "it takes us young folks to enjoy ourselves. How can you all mope here?"

No one answered, but the guests looked at each other with significant glances, and broke up into pairs gliding away from his path.

"Where is Amy and the old woman?" he inquired, without much heeding this constraint among his friends. "It's getting nigh on time to go home, I reckon."

No one answered him. But that moment Dr. Blake came out of the little room, which everybody knew as the minister's study, and, laying his hand on Leonard's arm, drew him in and closed the door.

The minister was sitting by a little table, from which many a score of sermons, with innumerable heads, had been given to the people; a single candle shed its light on his face which was more than grave, and he looked toward the door with a troubled eye as Leonard entered.

"What is this?" said the mill owner, a little bewildered by the gloom which filled the little apartment. "Oh! you wish a reckoning of accounts. Very good, we have all given in our contributions, and I have a list set down with a pencil. Short reckonings make long friends; it won't take more than half an hour, any way."

The minister looked at Dr. Blake imploringly. He had no courage to execute the task imposed on him; the unconsciousness, the easy kindness of Leonard's manner went to his heart.

It was like dealing a death blow between the eyes of a Newfoundland dog while looking trustfully in your face.

"Be it so," said Dr. Blake, in answer to this mute appeal; and in after days he spoke of this as the greatest trial of his life. "Be it so, I will speak to brother Leonard, and may the Lord of hosts be with him and bear him up."

"Amen!" whispered the minister, shading his eyes with a hand that shook in the candle-light.

"What is this?" cried Leonard, becoming alarmed. "What has befallen? Anything to our Amy?—anything to her mother?"

"Sit down," answered the minister, softly—"sit down, brother."

Leonard sat down as he was requested, looking first at his friend, then at the minister in a stern, questioning way, for he began to feel that there was something terribly wrong.

The doctor sat down also, but it was some moments before he could speak. At last, with all his manhood, he was able to utter a single word only,

"Brother!"

Leonard turned his honest, questioning eyes on his friend.

"Brother, I begin to wish we had spoken of this before. It is hard to bring trouble on an old friend."

"If there is trouble for me, doctor, speak out, I hope I can bear it with patience. God has been merciful to me hitherto. Shall I not take his crosses as well as his blessings? So long as the woman and her child are not smitten, I can bear anything."

"But it is through your child that this trouble comes. God help and forgive her!"

"Forgive her, my child, our Amy! What has she done? Oh! brother, tell me, what has she done?"

Dr. Blake shrunk away from the wild questioning of those eyes. The minister shrouded his face with one pale hand, while he reached forth the other and grasped that of Leonard's, which lay half-clenched upon the table.

"Speak to me—speak to me, I can bear this no longer," cried the poor father.

The minister bent down his head, grasped the hand which began to struggle and shake with both his, and began to speak in a low, rapid voice, like one who fears to stop lest his breath or courage should fail.

It was terrible to watch that strong man, as the story of his daughter's disgrace was unfolded to him; the whiteness of death crept slowly over his noble face; his hand grew cold as ice; drops of anguish stole out on his broad forehead, and stood there like globules of ice. But he listened in silence—that which the society had known long he heard at last—how Arnold had been at his house, evening after evening, alone with his daughter, while he was at lectures and prayer-meetings—how, but why go into the harrowing details of his disgrace, of her terrible downfall?

"And now," said the minister, with tears in his eyes, "now we can delay no longer. We had hoped that something might have prevented the painful steps we are now compelled to take."

Leonard did not speak, but a terrible anguish smouldered in his eyes.

"She is a member of our society; without confession and atonement, no sinner can remain in communion with God's people."

The shudder that crept through that strong frame made the table on which the unhappy father leaned tremble visibly, and a low groan broke from his lips.

"We have been forbearing, we have prayed for you, wept for you, brother Leonard; nay, against such evidence have been resolutely unbelieving in the poor child's actual guilt. We were fain to believe that a secret marriage had taken place somewhere; but now certain news comes that the young man is about to wed another person."

Leonard started and looked up with a sharp, burning glance. The minister understood it, and answered sadly,

"Yes, news came to-night that Benedict Arnold is about to marry the young French woman, who spent last Thanksgiving at his father's house."

Here Leonard started to his feet, dashed the minister's hand from him, and turned his white face upon Dr. Blake. Then the agony that tore him broke forth.

"Is this thing true?"

"I have feared it long—known it of a surety during the last two months," answered the doctor.

Leonard strode toward the door, then came suddenly back, and, leaning hard on the table with both hands, spoke to the minister.

"Wait, have a little patience before you bring the young creature that was my child into the broad aisle for public scorn. She will not stand there alone. I call on you both to witness that I, Joshua Leonard, have been a God-fearing man since the beard was black on my chin, but if this young man crosses my path I must kill him!"

"Brother!" almost shrieked the minister, trembling in all his limbs at the whirlwind of human passion that rushed by him.

"Joshua Leonard!" cried the doctor, in a voice of stern rebuke, seizing the hand that Leonard lifted heavily from the table as he ceased speaking, "have you forgotten that vengeance belongeth to God?"

He might as well have grasped an iron gauntlet, for any response that hand gave to his, or have argued with a whirlwind when it tears an oak up by the roots. The bosom tempter that had dwelt with that man almost unsuspected from his birth up, had been his pride—the strong, inborn pride that had its growth in a vigorous, independent nature. Now they were tearing it up root and branch, and rebuked him that he struggled against the tempest that was to make his heart a desert. After a time, "the still small voice" would whisper through all this whirl of passion, but it was not yet.

Again he strode to the door and opened it. There, upon the other side, he found his wife, her cheeks crimson and wet with tears that she was trying to wipe dry with a gorgeous silk handkerchief, while she indignantly refused the consolation which half a dozen of the sisters were offering.

"Come, Joshua, come home. This isn't the place for you and I. There's neither charity, nor truth, nor the milk of human kindness anywhere for us and ours. No, sisters, don't speak; I know what I'm a-saying, and stand by it. You're slanderers, unbelievers, blasphemers! Do you hear? Yes, you are; for she, my Amy—our Amy, Joshua—is innocent and good as a little child, and of such is the kingdom of heaven—there! Come, Joshua, come, husband. It's high time to be a-going when human beings can say what these sisters have been trying to make me believe."

Leonard did not seem to know that she was speaking, but suffered her to put her arm through his, and walked on, without heeding the crowd that drew respectfully back, or the glances of Christian sympathy that followed

him; but she called out, with hysterical force, "Yes, it's my duty—I forgive you one and all; but don't ask me to forget, for I can't do it."

Leonard literally did not hear this. His faculties were locked up. He walked forth like an iron man.

The couple got into their one-horse wagon, and drove home. Leonard was hard and silent all the way; while the good wife sat folded in her shawl, crying bitterly, but with a hushed grief; for, now that she had no one to struggle against, her high spirit broke down, and many thoughts came to her mind that left her completely heart-broken.

"What if it were all true?"

It would force itself upon her: first as a doubt; then a dread; then—God help the poor mother!—almost as a certainty. How many little things came crowding to her mind, each bringing its bitter proof of what she dreaded to believe, resented against herself, and yet could not drive out of her heart!

When these feelings had fastened themselves upon her, she felt the yearning want of contradiction with which the soul strives to fling off a painful belief.

Had he heard it? Did his heart prove traitor to his wishes, as hers was doing? She longed to know, but felt an unwarrantable dread of disturbing the silence into which he had fallen. At last she reached forth her hand, touching his arm with a strange feeling of awe.

"Joshua, you don't believe it? Oh! do speak and say just that."

He attempted to answer, but the words of shame grew husky in his throat and died there.

"Won't you speak to me, husband?"

"Yes, mother—no, not that; you ain't a mother now, only a poor, childless woman, who will never lift up her head again."

"And you turn agin her too! Oh! Joshua, who will stand by her if we believe that?"

He did not answer, but a low, hoarse moan told that an effort had been made.

"Oh! father, does your heart ache like that?" cried the wife, piteously.

"It will never stop aching," he said, heavily.

She had nothing more to say. The conviction of Amy's guilt closed more and more darkly around her own mind—what could she say?

Meantime Amy had fled homeward with wild speed. She did not seek the highway, for there would be wagons and groups of old neighbors going home from the donation party. They would ask her to ride, might question her of the reason why she was on foot and alone. No, she would avoid all living things. The fields

were wet and misty with dew, but she took no heed of that, nor cared for the stone walls and rail fences that blocked her passage across them. Once or twice she stopped and looked vaguely around, like a deer seeking some covert. Then she would spring forward, and struggle through the moist grass till her garments were wet through and through. There was fever in her blood, and the dampness did her good. More than once she stooped down to the red clover tufts and white daisies, that seemed to have closed themselves against her, and, sweeping up handfuls of dew, bathed her lips and her burning forehead. But nothing would appease the fire within except sharp motion. So away she rushed through the sweeping grass, while the bent, but scarcely trampled meadow flowers, started back as if affrighted from her tread; and the pure stars looked down upon her in heavenly sorrow, that anything they and the angels knew to be innocent should take that guilty seeming.

Amy went homeward, not with any definite intent, but because she had no other place in which to hide herself. Indeed she had no formed wish or plan; but, like a wounded bird, fled onward to escape the great pain aching at her heart.

At last she came within hearing of the Falls—within sight of the mill and of her father's cabin. Everything was dark there. The rushing waters made her stop and think. What if she turned that way—not toward the saw-mill, the thought of those dark logs made her nerves creep; but higher up in the rush of the whirlpool, where the starlight could fall upon her as she died?

As this thought held her in thrall, a whip-poor-will, hid in some tree back of her father's house, began to wail forth his protest; and, strange to say, there was something in his song that won her away from the evil temptation that was drawing her fascinated toward the Falls. It seemed like some friend, who had known trouble, calling her away home.

The cabin was dark and still: No light but the stars—no sound but the whip-poor-will, who seemed plaintively bewailing her sorrow. There was little occasion for bolts in those days, a latch-string drawn in was sufficient indication that no one was at home. Amy felt for the knot to this leathern thong, and let herself in. A few gleams of starlight stole after her, so that she was not left in utter darkness. But, now that the poor child had reached home, what could she do? In a few moments her parents might be there. She must meet them.

—must look in her father's face. The thought drove her wild; she turned and prepared to flee again. Ah! if her mother would but come alone! but that kind, stern father, she could not meet him!

But where could she go? Who would receive her? Where in the wide, wide world was there a roof to shelter her, save that which now seemed to frown her away? As these dreary questions sunk into her heart, she heard a sharp rattle of wheels coming up the road. It was her father and mother.

Amy started, and attempted to rise, but her limbs gave way; her breath seemed to stop in her throat, and, before she had power to move, the wagon stopped, and she heard her parents coming. Desperation gave her strength, and she stood up; but the corner into which she had shrunk was dark, and the room seemed to be empty to the two persons who darkened the door.

"She is not here! Oh! Joshua, she has not come home! Where can my child be gone?" cried the good woman, calling piteously, and beating the air with her hands. "They have driven her wild! They have hunted her to death! She is lost—dead!"

"Hush!" commanded the stern-voiced man. "It would be a mercy if what you say is true!"

"Oh! Joshua! Joshua! she is our child—our only child!"

"No, not our child. She was as the apple of this eye, but I pluck her out."

A sharp, low wail broke out from the darkness of the room; then, with the fleetness of a bird and the stillness of a ghost, Amy passed by her father and away. He saw her a moment, flitting through the starlight which fell across the road; then she was suddenly engulfed in the black shadows of the saw-mill.

"Oh! Joshua! Joshua Leonard! what have you done? It was our own poor angel child, for she is an angel! Cover her with sin and iniquity like a garment, heap ashes on her head, and she would come out white as snow compared to them that make charges agin her! What have you done, Joshua Leonard, but turned, like a pelican of the wilderness, agin your own flesh and blood! Why don't you speak? Why don't you move? Can't you call out and bring her back, as the prodigal father called for his son? Amy! Amy!"

Poor woman! her voice was so choked with the passion of her grief, that what she meant for a shout scarcely rose above a hoarse whisper.

"Oh! mercy! mercy! God has taken away my voice! Shout! you hard-hearted man. Scream till the woods ring! My child shall not be turned out of doors!"

Her voice broke forth now. She struggled past her husband, pushing him aside with force, and ran wildly up the road, calling with frantic grief for her child.

"Come back, Amy—my own—own Amy! Come back and take poor mother along, since he turns agin us, and believes us guilty, and wishes us dead, we'll leave him all that there is, and go off into the cold, wide world all alone. Amy! Oh! Amy, do speak to your mother! She loves you just as well as ever! She'll stand by you, right or wrong! She'll die for you—starve for you—work for you—she'll go down on her two knees to that committee and beg 'em to let you off! If they won't do that, she'll stand up by your side in the broad aisle of the meeting-house, afore the hull world, and tell 'em all that it was her own fault—that she did it all by her miserable way of bringing you up! Come back, Amy darling! come back to your mother!"

But there was no answer to this pathetic cry. It rang through the darkness of the saw-mill, and rolled itself to death among the rushing waters; but, though she paused to listen, holding in her grief, no reply reached her, save that of the whip-poor-will, that sounded harsh and cruel, mocking her anguish, as if the strange voice joined with her daughter's enemies and clamored for punishment.

Then a horrible fear came to her heart: Had Amy plunged into the watery grave from which God had once saved her? Was she then floating, stark and cold, among the logs under her feet? The pangs of her anguish came sharp with the thought. She bent over the black abyss, shrieking forth the unhappy girl's name in heart-rending cries.

Joshua Leonard heard these cries, and they smote through his iron frame as lightning strikes an oak. He had been dumb till now. The sight of his child flitting by him like a ghost, with that pale face turned away from his in terror, had killed the anger in his heart. He had not heard the reproaches of his wife; for the moment every faculty of his being was locked. But the cries of that poor mother brought him to life again. It was terrible to hear them cleaving through the darkness. He started toward the mill; but, as he left the threshold stone, the mother came across the road and passed him. Her face was ghastly in the starlight, and her teeth chattered as with

cold. She had no reproaches for her husband then; but, seized with pity, threw her arms around him.

"Oh! Joshua, she is dead! We—no, no, I have killed her!"

In the very depths of her sorrow the poor mother was generous: for her life she would not have upbraided him then.

"Did you see her?—hear anything?"

"No, it was all over. Everything was still."

He broke from her arms, entered the house; and, seizing the tinder-box, fell upon his knees, and began to strike out great sparks of fire from a flint and steel.

"Bring the lantern. She may have hid herself from fear of her father. God forgive me! Bring the lantern!"

Mrs. Leonard opened a door, and took the lantern from its nail in the cellar-way, but she was obliged to kneel down on the hearth and take hold of the candle with both hands while her husband lighted it; and then the flame quivered, as if a high wind were passing by, from the irrepressible trembling of her limbs.

When the candle was locked into its tin prison, the miserable pair went down to the saw-mill together. Pale and shivering they wandered together around the heaped up boards and logs, calling Amy softly by her name, in dread of frightening her by loud tones, but they found nothing to indicate her presence, living or dead.

Leonard held his lantern down through the floor till the black waters reddened to its glare. His wife leaned over his shoulder, casting appalled glances into the abyss, but turning every instant to cover her eyes, overcome with dread of finding the terrible thing she sought. Leonard's face brightened a little when he saw that the logs, which lay in the water like great monsters asleep, were dry on the upper surface. Surely if she had plunged to her death in this spot there would have been some motion left in the timbers she must have touched—some marks of water dashed over the bark.

Leonard rose from his knees and stood upright, with a glow of hope in his eyes.

"Our God is merciful, she is not here," he said, with tears streaming down his rough cheeks.

His wife gave a sob and flung herself into his arms, crying like a little child.

He kissed her tenderly, wiped the tears from her face, and pressed it against his bosom.

"Ah!" he said, with humility, "how much better you are, wife, than I am; how much better in the sight of God!"

"Dear me! No, no, Leonard, don't say that!"

"You had the grace to forgive at once. It was I, the strong one, who drove her away, our poor, weak child!"

"Don't, Leonard, you break my heart. If she could but see you now, the very look of your eyes would bring her back."

Leonard took up his lantern, and, passing one strong arm around his wife, who began to look hopefully up to his brightening face, went out of the mill. He held the lantern low as he reached the firm ground, searching for tracks in the grass. He found none, however; but in the dust of the road, rendered moist by a heavy dew, small footprints appeared, which he knew to be Amy's.

"She is alive—she is alive; we shall catch up with her in a little while," cried the glad mother. "Won't we be good to her, and comfort her, and stand up against the whole world for her, Leonard?"

"With God's help, my wife!"

"Oh! of course; I meant that only it seems so easy to forgive one's child without help, you know."

Thus talking together, these not altogether unhappy parents traced the footsteps of their erring child along the dust of the road, till they disappeared in the hoof-prints and wagon tracks of a cross road that led from the festival at Norwich.

"She has gone back to the minister's," said the father, pausing in his walk.

"Yes," answered the mother, with a thrill of yearning tenderness, "it is up yonder she has gone. Her own mother would not comfort her, so she went to our best friend."

"Sit down here, and we will wait till she comes back," answered the father, with a deep swell of the heart; "poor child! how tired and broken-hearted she must be."

They sat down together on the trunk of a newly-fallen tree, which lay upon the sward on one side of the road; and thus with their arms around each other heavy-hearted, but comforted in the best of all human love, that which springs from time, they watched and waited for the coming of their child. Few words passed between them; but sometimes, when the night air chilled his wife, he would gather her in his arms and comfort her against his heart.

It was long after midnight when these two stricken people arose, wearily, and returned home, saying softly to each other,

"Never mind; our child will come back to-morrow, then she will know how much we love her."

CHAPTER XXI.

AMY had left the house from fright alone. The sound of her father's voice, in stern denunciation, fell like iron on her heart. She was out-doors, and fleeing along the shadowy side of the road before a thought of where she was going entered her mind. She was tired now—a little rest made her feel how tired—and she longed to lie down on the turf, in some corner of the fence, and die. But she dared not rest, or sleep. Some one might pass by, and, seeing her there, guess that she had been driven forth by her father—her dear, good father, whom she loved so dearly, and yet had offended beyond hope of pardon.

The delicate reticence of her nature shrunk from this exposure, so she wandered on till the very tree, on which her parents afterward watched so many hours, tempted her to sit down. Here a feeling of utter dreariness fell upon her; homeless, friendless, disgraced, ill, what could she do? where could she go, back to her parents? Alas! she had no courage for that. Who on the wide earth would give her shelter now? She thought over all her meagre list of friends; was there one who would not pull in the latch-string when she was seen to approach in the desolation of her disgrace? She could not hope that there was.

Then Amy thought of her lover with a sort of dreamy pain. He had left her to all this—betrayed her into something worse than death. She wondered if he guessed at her present distress, and if the knowledge would give him a moment's uneasiness. Then she fell into a sort of apathy, and would believe nothing, not even what Hannah Arnold had said, nor the stern words of her own father. Her feet were wet; her limbs were chilled; but there was strange heat in her forehead. Altogether, it was insanity that possessed her, else why was she there so cold, and at night? Why did she think such wicked things of him? Why did she so long to creep away and hide herself forever and ever?

I think Amy fell asleep a moment, but a wagon coming down a distant hill aroused her; she must not stay there. But alas! her limbs were so heavy, her poor frame so terribly chilled that she could hardly move, and fell back from the stone wall that she attempted to climb, trembling with weakness.

Then what would she find on the other side but long, wet grass, and stones harder than the hearts that had condemned her? A friend—had she one on earth?

It might have been some pitying angel that

reminded her that moment of Hagar, and her last words in the orchard. She forgot that the negro woman belonged to *his* father; or, if she remembered, the idea brought vague comfort with it. Yes, she would go to Hagar, whose words had been so full of pity.

The wagon was close by now, or she might have dropped off into lethargy again. As it was, she started up and walked steadily forward till she came in sight of the Arnold mansion. A light burned in the front room after the fashion of those times; Hannah was sitting up with her betrothed husband, and their happy, low voices, as they conversed by the open window, floated out on the air, mocking the poor wanderer, who stood leaning upon the gate looking at them through her blinding tears. It was now late at night; so Hannah arose, with a happy blush on her cheek, and bade Paul good night, placing her hand in his with the sweet confidence which follows a full avowal of mutual affection.

Hannah had left the minister's directly after Amy's departure, and thus escaped the whispers and half-spoken scandal that followed the poor girl's flight, else there would have been tears instead of roses on that young cheek, for she loved Amy Leonard with her whole heart, and grieved silently at the change which promised her another sister-in-law.

Amy saw Hannah stand up drooping toward Paul like a flower on its stalk, till her lips met his in the first kiss of their betrothal. How tenderly he laid his hand upon her head! with what gentle respect he led her to the door, and whispered good night!

Amy saw it all, and the bitterness of her own fate pressed upon her with cruel force. She could bear the scene no longer, but opened the gate and stole round the house, hushing her breath as she went.

Hagar slept in a little bed-room off the kitchen—a room which Amy had played in scores of times when she and Hannah were children together. The kind soul was wakeful that night, for she knew something of the sorrow Arnold's engagement to the French girl would bring to that young creature. A sense of wrong oppressed her honest heart; she could not get the pale face of that young creature out of her mind, it haunted her like a ghost as she said afterward.

While she was lying, in this half-wakeful state, she heard footsteps coming round the house, and the rustling of garments brushing through the plantain leaves with a heavy sound. Then two hands, beating with their open palms

against the window, aroused her completely, and she sat up in bed, her wool half-uncurling with fear, and her great eyes riveted on the window.

"Whose dar?—whose dar, I say?" she cried out. "If it's a live pusson, speak out; if it's a ghost, de Lord a massy on us! for I'm alone in dis part ob de dwelling."

"Hagar, oh! Hagar, let me in. You told me to come if I wanted a friend. Let me in, Hagar, I am shivering with cold—I am ready to drop."

Hagar knew the voice and sprang up.

"Hush, Miss, I knows yer voice, and opens to it to once. Jest go round to the kitchen door, and I'll be dar in no time."

The face went away from the window; and Hagar, huddling on a skirt and short-gown, opened the kitchen door.

"Come in—come in, poor little honey bird!" she said, drawing the shivering girl in with both hands. "Don't be afeared, yer welcome as greens in spring time; dar, dar, sit down on de hearth—it's kinder warm yet—whilst I rake open de ashes and blow up de embers."

Amy fell into a great armed-chair that stood near the hearth, and, leaning her head back, sighed heavily. Hagar was busy attempting to kindle up the fire, which ignited slowly; but a few splinters of pine knots soon shot up in a flame, and then Hagar rose from her knees prepared to say some comforting words to her guest, but she was startled to see the white face falling forward on her bosom with the stillness of death. Amy had fainted.

Quick as thought the negress ran to a cupboard, and, seeing a camphor bottle, poured some of its contents into the palm of her hand, with which she bathed Amy's forehead and temples, muttering caresses and words of compassion amid her kind work.

After awhile Amy breathed again, and feebly lifted her head. Hagar ran for a pillow.

"Dar, dar; jes rest yer sweet head agin dat, and take a few drops ob dis 'ere camphor. It'll take de chill right off from yer heart. Dear, dear, how wet yer feet are, and yer go-to-meeting frock!"

Down upon her knees Hagar fell, and, taking off the wet shoes, began to rub the white feet they had chilled with great tenderness, buzzing and purring over them like a cat comforting her kittens.

"Yes, yes, yer got one friend yet, anyhow; and, while Hagar lives, to say nuffin of tudder pusson as is devoted to her, nobody shall hurt yer. Dar, dar, don't yer feel 'em getting warm and rosy as a little baby's feet when its mother

kisses 'em? Now try to open yer eyes wide; and if yer could jest smile a little, it'd seem ter encourage me while I go up stairs and call Missus."

"No—no, don't call any one!" pleaded Amy, struggling to sit up. "I can't think how I came here; but your kind words ran in my head all the way; and I forgot that it was at his home you lived. I will drink a few drops of the camphor, Hagar; then give me my shoes and stockings, and I will go away!"

"Go away! No you won't. There!"

"Yes, Hagar, I must; this is no place for me. I was not quite myself, or you would not have seen me here."

"But where will yer go to?"

"I don't know!"

"What will yer do?"

"I don't know!"

"What sent yer away from hum so late o' night?"

Amy turned her head with a moan of pain: but answered nothing.

"Do yer want to go back?"

Two great tears rolled down those pale cheeks, and Amy whispered sadly,

"I cannot go there, Hagar. It is not my home any more!"

"Den der's only one thing ter be said 'bout it; here you is, and here you'll stay till morning, sure. I'll jest hang over de tea-kettle and make a hot cup o' tea, which you shall drink in comfort, while I rub yer feet till dey burn agin. Arter dat, per'aps yer tell me something else that'll do yer good. Hark! I hear somebody a-coming down stairs. Wasn't dat a creak?"

Amy started up, and, regardless of her naked feet, prepared to escape; but Hagar forced her kindly into the chair again, striving to pacify her fright.

"Dar—dar now, honey bird! don't be skeered, yer haven't nothing but friends under dis roof, anyhow; nobody kin come as isn't glad ter see yer. So jes sit still and stop shaking! It'll do no good; and, what don't do no good, is wasting de Lord's precious time."

The poor, weak girl suffered herself to be controlled, though her eyes, now wide open and burning with affright, were turned upon one of the doors like those of a chained gazelle.

The door opened a little, and a sweet voice called out, "Hagar."

"Well, Missus," answered the handmaiden, "what am wanting?"

"Nothing, Hagar. Only I heard a noise in

the kitchen, and, as everybody was in bed, fancied that something might have happened."

"Something has happened! Look here—look at dis poor lamb; stand by her, Missus, or her death'll be on our heads as sure de Lord knows what's what. Come here, Missus; kneel down by de side of Hagar, and pray Armighy God to forgive dem as has brought her to dis. It'll be praying for yer own son!"

Mrs. Arnold came into the room at this appeal; her white bed-dress sweeping the floor; and her sweet, old face shaded by the borders of her night-cap; the face was anxious; the eyes full of tender compassion. She stooped over Amy and looked into her averted face, as the angels look when they pity us most.

"Amy, my poor child, has this news troubled you so much?" she said, stealing one arm across the young girl's shoulders, and resting the head on her own motherly bosom.

Amy's eyes were closed; but a gush of hot tears rained over her cheeks.

"I am sorry, you can't think how sorry. Indeed, Amy, we all had hoped otherwise; we loved you, and will always love you dearly. No stranger ever can seem so much like a daughter to me."

Amy could only answer with convulsive sobs; but she lifted her arms and clung to Mrs. Arnold.

"Ah! this is terrible; I feared something, but not this entire heart-break," said the gentle lady. "What can we do, Hagar? Is there no way of comforting her?"

Hagar stood looking at her mistress as if she wondered at the question. Then she took Amy from the arms that unfolded her, and, laying her head on the pillow, beckoned Mrs. Arnold to follow her into the bed-room.

Amy was worn out with weeping, but her frightened eyes followed them wildly; and she made a struggle to get up, but fell back again, and lay helpless, listening to the sound of Hagar's voice in the next room, for terror had hushed the storm of her grief.

When Mrs. Arnold came forth again, her mild face had changed so that you would hardly have known it. She seemed like a criminal who had just listened to a sentence of death.

Hagar stayed in the bed-room muttering to herself, and denouncing the author of all this woe in order to relieve her own feelings, while she smothered her words that they might not wound her mistress.

Mrs. Arnold went up to Amy, who saw by her face that another was made wretched as herself. Sorrow, commiseration, and horror

struggled over those delicate features. She knelt down softly before the young girl and took her two hands.

"What can I do for you, Amy?" she said, in a heart-broken way. "I am but a weak woman, and he is my only son; but, God helping me, this marriage shall never take place!"

Amy gasped for breath; the first hope came suddenly like an arrow, and was sharp as pain.

"Bend down your head, my poor child; tell me everything, for, from this hour, I am your mother."

Amy bent her head, but she had little to say. Arnold had judged well when he bound that delicate conscience with an oath; to have saved her own life, she would not have rendered him more criminal in the eyes of that gentle mother. So the unhappy lady rose up with a conviction that it was the old story—alas! so often told since; but in those days one from which the moral nature recoiled with a sort of terror. This vague feeling Mrs. Arnold could not altogether conquer; she did not caress Amy again, something in the depths of her pure soul prevented that, but she was even humble in her kindness.

"I am his mother," she said, mournfully, "and should have some influence with him. Little as my authority has ever availed, I will go as he has invited me, not to witness this marriage, but to prevent it."

"Can you? Oh! can you?" cried Amy, with renewed life.

"God will help me, for I am doing right; so we will hope. Now go with me up stairs, we shall find a bed in the next chamber to mine; no one shall disturb you. Sleep quietly; for, after this, if you wish it, this house shall be your home so long as it is mine."

Amy bent down her lips and timidly kissed the little hands that held her own; so the two went up stairs together, Hagar delicately keeping out of the way. But all night long the sound of her discontent broke out in muttered denunciations of men in general; and of all French people, male or female, who traveled about, as she muttered even in her sleep, like roaring lions, seeking whom they might devour.

Mrs. Arnold did not leave Amy's chamber till the poor girl sank into that dead, heavy sleep which follows great exhaustion. Then, as the night candle revealed the grief which had eaten all the bloom from that young face, her womanly soul began to yearn tenderly toward the helpless creature, spite of her faults, spite of the degradation which seemed inevitable, and in which her own household must share. Really good

women are always charitable, always ready to seek for the good which lies under weakness and error; especially among sister women. She has no pleasure in dragging forth evil, and only stoops to it that she may ameliorate and reform it. Deprived of this heavenly privilege, she casts the veil of her own pure thoughts over the deformity of error, as God himself hides the nakedness of winter under robes of white snow and jewels of ice.

So it was with Mrs. Arnold. A less heavenly woman might have sought some excuse for her own child at the expense of this poor girl; but her heart was filled with but one wish, that of saving both from future sorrow. When Amy was quite unconscious, the mother kissed her forgivingly on her lips that trembled even in sleep, and, with her heart full of compassion, went back to her own room.

She did not close her eyes till morning; but instead of dwelling bitterly on the evil that had befallen her house, lay devising means of extrication, hoping for the best; and, under all woes, a sweet, yearning tenderness, vague, but inexpressibly delicate, which brought back memories of that year when her first born son brought with him the heaven of her own maternal life. So when she thought of that son, in his arrogance and selfishness, it was as our Saviour regarded the downfall of Peter with forgiveness, and that increased love which the good are apt to bestow upon the weak. Weak! yes, that was the word! Mrs. Arnold could not bestow the term *wicked* on the son whom she would now only think of as a noble infant smiling on her bosom. It was only Hagar who dealt with the young man according to his own plain, unvarnished iniquity; and even she would permit no other person to breathe a word to his discredit.

When Mr. Arnold awoke in the morning, he found his wife ready dressed and sitting on one side of the bed. It seemed to him that something like the flutter of rose-leaves across his lips had disturbed his slumbers, and he opened his eyes with a smile. He could smile then—that long suffering man—for all the signs of his long degradation had passed away from his face, and from his life. He was, soul and body, a new creature, an earnest, honest man, who had once resolved to act rightly, had grown strong and good. Unlike some reformed inebriates, who are constantly parading past sins, as if there were something in them to gloat over and boast of, Arnold sought to ignore that portion of his life in which his manhood was so cruelly swamped, as if it had not been. He had sinned, repented, and been forgiven, both of God and

man. There was something sublime in this, which a reckless parade of his past faults would have destroyed utterly. It is morbid vanity, more than a wish to benefit others, that leads men to hold up even past follies to the world.

But the elder Arnold was not a man of this stamp. The story of his reformation was told plainly in the clear brightness of his eyes—in those firm, compact features, and in a softness of tread which had self-respect and power in it. In all her life Mrs. Arnold had never been so proud of her husband. While he looked upon her in the morning with those dear loving eyes, she could not be altogether unhappy. But now, that she was about to bring new sorrow upon him, her eyes fell, and she was at a loss for words.

"What is it, wife? Something has gone wrong, I see by your face; troubled yet about your share of the donation? Is that it, foolish little woman?"

Poor lady! she had forgotten all about the donation party which had been a trial; and now it seemed so far back, that she wondered how he could remember such a trifle. She shook her head, and a quiver came to her lips.

Arnold took the alarm. There was one point about which his fears always hovered.

"Benedict! Is it anything about him?"

She could not answer him at once, but bent down and kissed his forehead, striving to tranquilize him beforehand with her gentle woman's tact.

"Don't, wife," said the husband, with sharp apprehension in his voice; "where he is concerned, anxiety kills me. You look pale; your eyes are heavy. Speak out, if anything is wrong I can bear it!"

"It is about him; but do not look so distressed; it is a great wrong; but there is time, there must be time to set it right."

"Speak out!"

"I cannot in a word even to you. It is hard to blacken one's own son."

"I know it. God help me, do I not understand that?"

"And a parent, especially a mother, should screen her child from the consequences, even if he has done wrong!"

"You think so? Well, I am glad of it. Your words take a load from my conscience; but you pain me. What is it?"

With a trembling voice and flushed cheek she told him all. When she had done, he was sitting up in bed stern as a rock. "As there is a God to aid me in a just act, this shall be righted," he said, and the husband and wife parted.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PARLOR PASTIMES.

RHAPSODIES.—A director is appointed who gives a list of short sentences to all the parties playing, who are required, first, to write them down so as not to forget them, and then each one is to write a rhapsody, with the sentences all included in the successive order in which they were given. When all are written, they are handed to the director, who reads them aloud. Considerable amusement is thus afforded by the various ways in which the tasks are performed.

The sentences should consist of a variety of subjects; and foolish ones mixed in with others, will make it more difficult for the players to place them in order, and will make greater nonsense when completed. These sentences are given as an example: *Genesee Falls—Three-legged stool—Gen. Washington—Walk in the woods at night—Our gray kitten—How do you do?—A vision of beauty*—and, I am very much obliged. We will suppose one of the party to have strung the sentences together in this wise:

"I was recently on a visit to *Genesee Falls*, and on the second day of my sojourn, I joined an excursion party down the *Genesee river*. The boat was very crowded, and I could not find a seat until I espied an unoccupied *three-legged stool* by the side of an old gentleman whose face resembled very much the portraits of *Gen. Washington*. I took my seat by his side, and he entered into conversation with me, and told me of an adventure that occurred to him the week before, while taking a *walk in the woods at night*. 'I heard a noise,' said he, 'which I first thought was from our *gray kitten*, but suddenly it seemed to me as if some one cried out, *how do you do?* and I stopped short to see whence the sound proceeded. Resuming my walk, I met a few steps further on, an exhausted creature lying on the road. I lifted her up, and her face in the full star-light seemed fairly like a *vision of beauty*—it was so very lovely. I took her to my home, and the next morning, when, quite recovered, she came to leave, her simple words of *I am very much obliged to you*, were spoken with so much sweetness and apparent gratitude, that they conveyed more charm than a long address would have done from others."

The editor knew this game to produce great sport upon an occasion when a large party were assembled in the country. The sentences were given out one evening, and the rhapsodies read the next evening; this arrangement allowing more time and a better opportunity to prepare them. This game could also be made instructive by having suitable sentences, with the object of having them gracefully and correctly connected.

THE RULING PASSION.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 299.

CHAPTER XXII.

At early dawn Joshua Leonard and his wife were astir; neither of them had slept during the night, still no words had passed between them, save when the low voice of the wife rose in the darkness asking her husband if he slept. A deep sigh was sometimes the sole answer, but once or twice he said, "Yes, wife, I am awake," and that was all. When the daylight came, and the two could see each other face to face, Mrs. Leonard began to cry; the pale and locked features upon the pillow near her seemed so strange, that she was almost afraid.

Joshua said, "Hush! hush!" very mournfully; and, getting up, built a fire, and went out to the well with the tea-kettle in his hand; but, for the first time in his life, he walked like an old man, and the well-pail slipped from his hold twice, as he attempted to lower the bucket down to the water.

When he came in, his wife sat on the hearth shivering. She watched him as he swung the kettle to its trammel, and left it enveloped in clouds of smoke, through which little streaks of flame shot and curled like vipers.

"It's no use," she said, drearily; "I can't get breakfast this morning; and as for eating, the first mouthful would choke me."

Joshua was standing, with his eyes on the struggling fire. His hands were locked, and falling loosely before him. The plaintive misery in his wife's voice penetrated to his heart.

"I was thinking of you," he said, tenderly. "It seems as if I should never eat again."

The housemother grew strong when she saw his weakness, and, rising, she said, with some energy,

"Come, Joshua, we must neither eat nor rest till Amy is found."

He took his hat from its nail, and she put on her bonnet; so the two went heavily forth in search of the lost one.

It was a misty, raw morning. Clouds of fog lay heavily on the meadows, the grass was sodden with moisture, and the trees shed storms of

cold rain from the branches when the wind swept them. Once more they searched in the saw-mill and around the Falls for some sign of her presence. Everything was still and dreary, but they found no trace of her progress in that direction. This gave them hope again; for the earth was moist, and tracks must have been left had she passed that way. The fear that some trace which the darkness had concealed would present itself, had haunted the man with dread all night; now his courage rose, for he felt sure that Amy was alive.

"Come," he said, taking his wife by the hand; "we will not stop till she is found."

So, leaving the cabin behind them, they walked down the road, looking to the right and left, as they had done the night before, half-expecting to find Amy in the shelter of some stone wall, or crouching in some crook of the fence.

After awhile they saw a man coming along the highway, toiling along heavily, as if he, too, carried a burden of age or care which sunk his feet in the moist clay of the road.

Leonard stopped suddenly, and stood still, with his feet planted sternly in the road, and his face growing hard as iron.

It was the elder Arnold.

"Maybe he's found our Amy," said Mrs. Leonard, softly. "Don't look that way, Joshua; he isn't to blame."

Her words awoke a memory in Joshua's heart. He recollected the day when the old man coming along the road had warned and advised him against the visits of his son. No, his wife said truly, the poor, unhappy father was not to blame; but it was terrible to meet him nevertheless.

Slowly and steadily the two fathers approached each other. Both were pale, the eyes of both were full of stern sorrow. Arnold made a motion, as if to hold forth his hand, but drew it back, shrinking within himself. There was a struggle in Leonard's bosom, but at last he tore away from the evil feelings that bound him, and held forth his hand.

The features of Arnold began to quiver; two great tears rolled down his cheeks as he met the offered grasp.

"She's safe. Your child is safe."

Leonard wrung the hand in his grasp, and, looking at his wife, tried to smile.

"Where—where is she?" cried Mr. Leonard.

"At my house—with my wife. She came in the night, worn out, and wet through; poor, poor child!"

"At your house!" said Leonard, sternly, withdrawing his hand.

"Yes, brother, and that is the right place for my son's wife; for, as the Lord liveth, no other woman shall bear his name, or darken my door."

Here Mrs. Leonard began to cry, and sobbed out a crowd of disjointed ejaculations, that were pathetic only from the deep feeling they betrayed.

"Brother," said Leonard, "God has smitten us both in the heart of our pride. I know how to feel for you now! I am humbled, God help me!"

"Let's go, Joshua—let's go. I want to see my child. Is she coming home? Does she pine to see us? Has she cried her heart out? What did she say? How does she look? Why don't you tell me something about my daughter, brother Arnold?"

Mrs. Leonard's impatience was not to be restrained. She waited for no answer to her inquiries, but hurried on; and the two men followed her, conversing gravely and sadly together on the way.

Amy, exhausted and worn out, slept heavily that morning. As the chill went out from her system, a sense of protection and comfort stole over her. The great burden of her secret had dropped away. The very worst had come upon her, and after that every human soul knows something of repose. So Amy fell into a long, deep slumber, dreamless and still as death. Mrs. Arnold's gentle words had given her infinite consolation. She was, at all times, a dependent and clinging creature, more ready to endure and suffer than to act; and the mere physical comfort of a warm, soft bed under his father's roof had been enough to hush her sufferings into repose, for the time, at least.

Thus, when Mrs. Leonard stole on tip-toe into that large chamber, and moved softly toward the bed, Amy did not awake; but this new presence disturbed her, and, turning on the pillow, she began to cry in her sleep, till the gush of her own sobs grew so violent that she awoke.

"Amy!"

"Mother, is it you? What ails me? I have been dreaming such miserable dreams. It's time to get up and help about breakfast, I suppose? Has father gone to the saw-mill?"

"Amy, my own child!"

"Why, you've been crying too. How strange you look with a bonnet on, and—and—oh! mother, I remember it all now."

The poor girl cowered down in the bed with her frightened eyes turned on her mother, and seemed to hold her breath.

Mrs. Leonard bent over her and rained soft kisses on her face. "Chirk up, my dear, chirk up, nobody shall hurt you, or put you down while I live, and while your father lives, for he's a host in Israel. Don't cry, darling—don't cry, or you'll set me a-going, and I can't bear any more on it. There, there!"

"You have left father to come and find me; go back, mother, he has no one but you now."

"No, dear!"

"He wished me dead. I heard it, but it is the hardest thing on earth to die when one wishes it. You can't get rid of the life that is in you without doing such horrid things; then the darkness beyond is so fearful. Tell him I tried to die, but hadn't the courage to do what would stop my heart beatings. Tell him I'd give the world to see him, but now I'm weak and couldn't bear it. If he will only wait a little and not curse me, perhaps God will be merciful and take me out of his sight; I won't even pray to live, only for him and you, dear mother. Tell him this, and oh! ask him to forgive me after I'm dead, I won't plead for it now: but he might then."

"Be still, Amy, or you'll break my heart. It was a wicked word, and over in a minute. We searched for you nearly all night—your father and I—up and down, till it seemed as if we should drop in our tracks."

"What! he, my father!—my father!" murmured Amy, melting into a flood of tears, her very soul given up to tender regrets. "Oh! mother, has he forgiven me? Will he—will you have a little faith, a little forbearance with me? I have done wrong, very, very wrong, have deceived you, been disobedient. But oh! if I could tell you all, if you would but believe me without telling. Just forgive, and trust, and wait."

"We have forgiven on trust, or, without trust, no matter, Amy, what has happened; so long as God forgives his children we must stand by ours, it's nature, and it's religion. God doesn't lay little darling babies into our arms to have them turned out of doors for the first sin; them's

my sentiments, and they're your father's, too; we agreed on that last night in the saw-mill, he and I."

"And you were searching for me there; oh! if I had but known it," sobbed Amy.

"Perhaps it was all for the best, dear; if you hadn't come to this house, maybe the old man and your father mightn't have made up; as it is, I must say Mr. Arnold has behaved beautifully. He says that no other woman shall ever have his son's name, or darken his door."

"Did Mr. Arnold say that, mother?" cried the young girl, seizing her mother's arm with both hands.

"Yes, and Miss Arnold says it too; and as for Hagar, she near about upset us with kindness. She's got some toast and tea afore the fire waiting for you to wake up."

"I thought, last night, that Hagar was the only friend I had in the wide, wide world. Oh! mother, you are very good to forgive me."

"There, there. Kiss me once more, then try to get up and dress. I didn't tell you, but father's down stairs."

Instead of being elated, Amy shrunk down into her bed again. There was something in the idea of meeting her father that made her tremble.

"Don't take on so, he won't give you a cross look, to say nothing of hard words," said the mother, marking the change with the quick sympathy of her sex.

"I know that; but his kindness, I can't bear it while he believes— Oh! mother, what can I do?"

With broken conversation like this, the mother and child spent a few more minutes together, before they went down to the room in which Joshua Leonard sat waiting for them.

Few words passed between the father and daughter. Strange to say, the nervous timidity which had marked Amy's demeanor during the last few weeks, had, to a certain extent, disappeared. She was very weary, it is true, and the saddened whiteness of her face was touching to behold, but her look was clear and truthful. There was nothing of shame in the depths of those eyes; on the contrary, everything about her seemed pure as a lily; no shadow of guilt or shame could be found on her white forehead. She was grieved, heart-broken, but what seemed a consciousness of innocence gave gentle dignity to her movements.

With so much proof against her, and before a word of denial had passed her lips, the father took comfort from her appearance. She came up to him and knelt softly at his feet.

"Father!" she said, folding her hands meekly before her.

Leonard laid one hand on her head. With all his strength, he could not help blessing her whom he had intended only to forgive; his own honest heart bore witness in her favor, the idea of guilt connected with his child lost its force the moment she appeared. It was a moral conviction altogether independent of knowledge or reason. He *felt* that something pure and true lay at the bottom of this trouble.

"Father, may I go home with you and mother?"

"God forgive me the bitterness which drove you away, my child. I, who was so harsh against your fault, have prayed God, and still pray that He will forgive my own. Yes, come with us, Amy."

"Father, let me look in your eyes."

"Well, child!"

"You look into mine and almost smile. They accuse me—they believe in my fault—it is great, but not as they think, father; I would not go home, I could not live if all they suspect were true. Something tells you this, or the old look would not come back to your face. You believe me, father?"

He kissed her upon the forehead.

Then she stood up with more strength than had been witnessed in her demeanor for weeks and weeks.

Leonard was half-relieved. The innocent face of his child had its benign effect, but there was a delicate reticence in her nature which checked the questions that rose to his lips; for, with all his rude strength, this man shrunk from the interrogatories that might, he believed, have won her entire confidence.

While his wife had been in Amy's chamber, Arnold and Leonard had conversed together, about the best means of bringing something of good out of the shame that had fallen so suddenly upon them. At first Leonard sternly expressed his determination to seek the young man, and force an honorable atonement for the shame he had wrought; but Arnold knew his son better, and implored the wronged father to remain at home and leave the matter to him. Leonard yielded at last, but only with a reservation, if the father, with his lawful authority, failed, then the wronged man would take the matter in his own hands. Thus it was settled, and the Arnolds entered upon their preparations for what was, in those days, an important journey.

When Amy heard this, the flush and tremor of excitement came back. She stood a moment

disturbed with stormy thought, and then with quick resolve spoke,

"Father, I must go with Mr. Arnold."

"You, my poor child!"

"It is right—it is my duty. I must see him, though it kills me, I must go."

"She is right," said Mrs. Arnold, who had opened a door unnoticed, and stood on the threshold as Amy spoke. "She is no longer a helpless child, brother Leonard! See how strong the thought has made her. The day after to-morrow a sloop leaves the river; in that we take passage; Amy goes too. You will trust us, Leonard, and with God's help all shall be well."

Leonard looked irresolute. Amy saw it.

"Father, I pray you let me go."

Leonard's face cleared up. "Yes," he said, "but not without us—your mother and I—the sloop is large enough for us all."

Mrs. Arnold came close to Leonard as he spoke. "Brother," she said, gently laying a hand on his shoulder, "trust Amy with me, your old friend; I know Benedict well, no power can coerce him. He would defy heaven itself, but there are many generous qualities in his heart: leave them with his mother. The boy loves me, and I solemnly believe loves her. If sterner power is needed, Arnold will use it, have no fear; but as we will in all things do our utmost to protect your child, I beseech you put no unnecessary humiliation on mine."

"You are right, sister," said Leonard, touched to the heart by her motherly appeal. "God forgive me if any lurking vengeance made me wish to confront the young man! It is a hard thing to keep down a rebellious spirit."

"For my sake, for hers," pleaded the gentle matron. "You cannot strike him without breaking a poor mother's heart."

"I will stay at home; do with our child according to your will: the mother and I can only wait and pray."

Thus it was settled, and with calmer hearts than they had ever expected to know again, the Leonards returned home and reinstated Amy on the hearth-stone, from which she had been driven in the first storm of their sorrow.

CHAPTER XXIII.

In these days of long journeys, when a trip to Europe is decided on one hour, and undertaken the next; a voyage to New Haven from Norwich is scarcely more than a morning's drive; but in the time of our story it was altogether a different affair. When a sloop sailed

down the river, people gathered on the wharf to see it off; passengers took leave of their friends with tears in their eyes; and handkerchiefs of gorgeously printed cotton fluttered in the air, till the important craft was out of sight. Science has chained time and space, but human love and sympathy are the same forever and ever; and the people who gathered on the little wharf in those days, were actuated by exactly the same feelings which throngs our vast piers when a mammoth steamer goes out crowded with hundreds.

The preparation in Mr. Arnold's house was creating no little commotion. True, there was no great wardrobe to prepare. A huge chest, clamped with brass, which stood in the upper hall, was unlocked, and two or three dresses taken forth; a dainty silver gray silk, gored in the skirt and ruffled at the elbows, was refolded and placed in a small hair trunk; cap ribbons were smoothed out; and Hagar ran about the kitchen all one morning clapping bits of lace and muslin between her hands, which were white and crusted with flakes of starch to the finger nails.

Hannah Arnold, very grave and thoughtful, worked upon the kerchiefs and caps which were to shade the still pretty neck and brow of her mother. Her lover had returned home on the morning after Amy came to the house, in ignorance of the change which that event might make on his sister's destiny. The reticence of social life was severe in those days; and Hannah herself only knew that her friend Amy had taken the engagement of her brother with Laura more painfully than she had expected, and that trouble was threatened between the two families; that her parents threatened to interfere against the marriage, and thus darken her own lot.

If the young girl felt this to be a little hard on her, who can wonder? She had wronged no one. Paul had come to her with a free heart. Why was her brother's faithlessness, if such it was, to break up all her own sweet hopes? She felt too surely that any interference of her parents sufficiently potent to break up the marriage—would place her brother in perpetual feud with the family of his betrothed. Then what would be her own fate? All this made Hannah very gloomy and dispirited. She knew that Amy was in the house, but some sensitive feeling kept her from asking any explanation of the fact till the Leonards carried their daughter away again. Then she learned that Amy was to go with the family to New Haven, and this filled her heart with new anxieties.

Mrs. Arnold was also very much occupied. Her whole heart was so taken up with the great

evil that had befallen them, that she had not given the position of her daughter the consideration it deserved. A great wrong had been done, and her pure, honest nature was exercised in all its capacities to redeem that wrong. She thought no farther than this, and it was well for her object that she did not. The idea that her daughter also must be sacrificed might have overwhelmed her strength.

Thus it happened that the mother and daughter were, to a certain extent, put asunder during those few days. The thoughts occupying Mrs. Arnold's mind were not such as she could discuss freely with a young girl, brought up after the fashion of those times, and her confidence was rather bestowed on Hagar, who, in right of her own benefactions, looked on the whole affair as peculiarly belonging to her department.

On the evening before the sloop sailed, Mrs. Arnold and Hagar, after taking out the silver gray dress, and two or three garments of rich chintz, which were at once neatly packed for the journey, loitered over the open chest, as if there was something more to be said, which neither of them knew exactly how to begin.

Twice Mrs. Arnold put her hand into the chest and drew it forth again, with a flush on her cheek, at which Hagar, who sat on one corner of the chest before which her mistress knelt, turned her eyes decorously away. In the end, this sweet dame drew forth a little bundle from a corner of the chest, and, with the blush deepening on her cheek, began to untie it.

"Hagar!" she said.

"Well, Missus, what am it?"

"Here are a few things that I want you to whiten and do up while we are gone, if it won't be putting too much work on you."

"Too much work—what am you thinking 'bout? 'Cept the men folks, I shan't have nothing to 'tend to. Jest tell me what you want, and I'll do it, sure!"

Mrs. Arnold's lip began to quiver, and a mist came into her eyes as she opened the little bundle, and took out first one tiny garment and then another.

"It don't seem possible that he ever wore these," she said, looking at Hagar through her tears, as she thrust two slender fingers into a niche of a sleeve, edged with a cobweb of lace. "He was a noble baby, Hagar; don't you remember?"

"Yes, I can't 'spute that, but it seems ter me discreditable that he ever wore them ere frocks and things, and Miss Hannah arter him. Gracious me, how babies does alter in course of time, don't they?"

"He was my first child, you know, Hagar," said the gentle matron, flushing with the remembrance of that heaven of her young life, when a little rosy hand was laid, for the first time, on her bosom; "and now to think that he is a grown man, I can't realize it."

She sighed heavily, and the tears, which had stood in her eyes, began to rain down, dropping upon the little yellow garments in her lap.

"Nor I neither. De Lord ob hebben forgive him!" answered Hagar, wiping her eyes with one corner of her linsey-woolsey apron.

"And now," said Mrs. Arnold, between the faint sobs that began to gather in her bosom, "he is a man, while I am getting feeble and old. What if he refuses to listen? What if he should deal harshly with me and with her?"

"Don't think of no sich thing, Missus. De blessed Lord sends yer, and it's yer duty ter go right straight for'd, whether or no. Don't be skeered about nothing. Human natur' ain't bad enough to stand up again yer, 'specially yer own son. The minute he looks in yer eyes he'll wilt right down and give up, never fear."

"But if he should not—if Mr. Arnold were to fail, and cast him off—then, Hagar, this poor girl must be taken care of. We shall adopt her in his place, and deal tenderly with her, as if she were our own child."

"Ob course yer would," answered Hagar, gathering up a handful of her rough apron, and holding it to her eyes with a hard pressure; "but it won't ever 'mount to that. He'll come too."

"I hope so," said the mother, mournfully; "but it's a painful duty to undertake, and I'm not used to such things."

Hagar gazed on the poor lady despondingly a moment; then her face brightened all over, and, lifting her chair in the air, she broke out, all at once,

"S'posing I go with yer, Missus. He knows me of old. Let him only jest say his soul's his own, and I'll move the right thing out ob him."

Mrs. Arnold laughed faintly amid her tears, at which Hagar flung her apron down and smoothed it over her knees in a huff, until the lady, seeing this, began, in her tender way, to expostulate.

"Don't, Hagar—don't be hurt about it. What would the house come to without a head? Besides, I want some one that we love, and trust to be here, and welcome us when we come back. Who knows that it will not be a wedding party, all among ourselves, of course?"

Hagar brightened propitiously, and, taking up her apron again, began to plait the edge

between her fingers, holding her head on one side, as you sometimes see a hen eyeing its food.

"Missus, in the course of natur one wedding breeds another; and, if all things turn out 'cording to our wishes, perhaps you'll hear ob two colored pussons ob yer 'quaintance as may want to toe the same mark in yer kitchen."

Mrs. Arnold looked up and smiled pleasantly.

"Well, Hagar, no one will object. I only hope it may come to that."

"Then we has yer consent; and if yer sees that tall nigger as come with the gemman last winter, jest give him a hint of what's going on in the undercrust ob dis 'stablishment. Perhaps he'll wish he'd sent some word, or come back, as he promised to, when he knows that this member ob the fair sect he used to think so much on, is lost ter him for good and all."

Mrs. Arnold promised to remember. At another time she might have been amused with Hagar's transparent coquetry; but now her heart was too heavy even for a smile.

"Now," said Hagar, rising from her seat on the chest, "jest give me them things, and I'll have 'em white as the drifted snow afore yer come back."

"Not yet," answered the matron, gathering the bundle together. "No one ever did them up but myself, before this. I should like to wash them out once more, if you have no objection, Hagar."

Hagar was getting her chin into the air again; but the last few words modified her rising discontent, and she observed, in an indifferent way,

"Oh! well, Missus, if you take a notion to wash 'em out with yer own hands, I'll heat the water and set out the soap-dish. It's not my way to 'trude work on nobody, 'specially in the first wash; but when it comes to starching and ironing, and sich like, I reckon Hagar'll be wanted."

Mrs. Arnold gathered up her treasure of little garments, with a sigh, and stole down the back stairs into the kitchen, where Hagar, as good as her word, got the smallest tub in order, and, putting handful after handful of soap in the water, stirred up a snowy foam of suds in no time, with a few dashes of her hand.

Then, with tears in her eyes, the gentle housemother bent over her delicate work, as she had done years and years before in the first glow of her married life.

This was the last household work that Mrs. Arnold performed before her journey; and many a sadly tender thought filled her heart as those small hands accomplished their task. Yet, if

any one entered the room, she would look frightened, and, burying the article she held in her hand deep in the suds, would continue her task under water, regarding the person who approached her with shy and anxious glances.

When her task of love was done, the mistress had a long talk with Hagar about the housework, and those multifarious cares that were to devolve on the faithful kitchen slave. After that she was ready for rest; but when did rest come to a poor mother's heart burdened like hers with a certainty of unworthiness in the first-born of her life?

CHAPTER XXIV.

Now that Amy Leonard was at home once more, with her conscience free of its cruel secret, and the forgiveness of her parents assured, a certain degree of tranquillity came back to her heart. Rest, profound rest, seemed the sweetest boon that could be given her. For a little time she had cast off the thorny crown of her sorrow; and the very fact of having a home with its little comforts, one from which there was no fear of being driven, was, in itself, a great blessing. There was hope too in her heart. If her father, with his stern pride and blameless nature, could forget and forgive—if the loquacious mother could grow delicate and tender in the refining strength of her compassion, surely he could not persist in the great sin, which, for a moment, he might have meditated! Human nature could not be so bad as that. Led away by ambition, and the love of wealth his strong ruling passion, he might have gone farther than was honorable in his admiration of the young French girl; but to marry another, and she alive, that could never be.

Besides this vague faith in human nature, and in the honor of her husband, Amy knew that the elder Arnold and her own father had united in a determination to protect her. Oh! if she could have told them all—if she could have said to those sorrowing men, who still went forth to the open air with heavy shoulders and heads bowed down from a belief in the shame of their children—the truth, and the whole truth, how boldly and bravely they might have gone about their just work! But, above all things human, Amy loved Benedict Arnold: never in her life had she disobeyed his most imperious wishes. The very tyranny of his character made her look up to him with worshiping awe! His bold self-reliance was so far above the possibility of her own attainment, that it seemed grand and noble to her. But the charge

of secrecy, the vow which he had forced upon her, galled her delicate nature, and dragged it down like guilt itself.

All this Amy did not feel so acutely now as she had a day or two before; for the most harassing pain will grow stolid after a wild storm of passion, and it takes a little time to gather venom and strength to gnaw and rend the soul into fresh torment.

The one strong wish of Amy's heart was to see Arnold, to plead with him on her knees to give back her oath and her honor, that she might stand in her calm innocence a wife before the world. She was gentle, but not altogether weak. If he refused this—if he still persisted in branding her forehead with shame, then she would be just to herself—if her womanly protest went for nothing, she would claim freedom from that cruel vow, and, asking it back of heaven, prove to her father and his father that her greatest sin had been disobedience and secrecy. True, she had no record or certificate to prove this, both had been given to Arnold, but the clergyman was to be found. But why think of all these rebellious things? When Arnold knew of her sorrow—when he heard of that terrible scene at the minister's donation party, he would cast aside everything and protect her from his own proud sense of honor.

Thus Amy reasoned with herself, filling her life with fresh delusions, but finding comfort in them even in the saddest plight that ever a young creature was driven to.

Leonard had not yet told his wife or daughter of the arrangement by which Amy was to be given up, for a time, to the Arnolds, so the poor child wearied herself with plans, and grew sick with a wild desire to find her way to Benedict's presence, and there claim her place at his side. He should not use her weak, wicked oath to the cruel end of separating them. She was young, helpless, and forbidden to ask advice; but he could not look in her eyes and persist in doing the wrong they talked of.

In the midst of these reflections, Leonard told her of his promise to Benedict's father, and with sad kindness bade her prepare to set forth on the morrow.

Amy received the news as a feverish patient listens to the rush of cool waters. She clasped her hands and fairly wrung them in her extreme joy; her lips grew red as ripe cherries; her eyes danced with light: she seemed really alive for the first time in months.

And now her small preparations were entered upon with something of former cheerfulness. A sweet joy broke up from the bottom of her heart,

all springing from one thought. She would see him again in a few days, he might tell her with his own lips that some cruel mistake had arisen, out of which the agony through which she had passed had sprung.

The little party did not start so early as they had intended. A high wind blew strongly up the river, and kept the sloop at her wharf twenty-four hours beyond her appointed time.

These twenty-four hours were bitter ones to Amy Leonard. For, on the morning when she should have sailed, three men, deacons and trustees of the church, came with the slow, solemn dignity of a grave occasion, and, fastening their horses by the door yard fence, walked down to the saw-mill where Leonard was at work.

The unhappy man must have had some idea of their object, for his face flushed and grew pale as they approached, while he stood still trembling like a culprit. He had not slept a calm hour since the minister's donation party: and his nerves, which till then had seemed made of steel, were shaken.

He stood upright, as I have said, waiting for the potentates of the society to come up. The Christians of those days possessed many ideas of religion which the advancement of mind has softened and refined; now, a stern sense of duty, such as they understood it, filled every heart. The idea of consideration or gentle pity for an offender was regarded with distrust, as a snare and a weakness. If any such feeling ever clamored at their naturally kind hearts, they were ready to fall upon the earth and pray God to relieve them from a grave temptation. Indeed, indeed it was a stern type of religion which sent our forefathers into the great western wilderness.

When the functionaries of the society came before Leonard, he, knowing their business by intuition, stood still to receive them, without saying a word or attempting to reach forth his hand. His eyes filled with troubled light, and he looked upon his visitors with deprecating humility, that had, nevertheless, something strong and noble in it.

"Brother Leonard," said the foremost of the deputation, an old man whose locks, white as snow, fell down his back wound and tied by a rusty black ribbon, "brother Leonard, we have come, unwilling, and in the name of the Lord."

"I know—I know it all. My child—the poor, helpless, white rabbit up yonder—you will not leave her in the form to nurse her wounds and hide herself? Oh! brother Downs, couldn't you wait a little before you bring her to open shame?"

Just give us breathing time till God will hear our prayers. We can only wail and bemoan ourselves now. The gift of words has forsook us, even before the Lord. We can only bow down with our faces to the earth. Leave us alone, brethren—leave us alone! In a little while we can bear this better!"

"Nay, brother," said the old man, lifting his eyes slowly from the earth, where they had been riveted while Leonard spoke, "the laws of our society are strict, and change not. When a member of the fold backslides, prompt correction must be applied. We have waited long and patiently, hoping to be spared this grave duty; but the house of our Master must be rescued from contamination. The girl has sinned grievously, and must atone with penitence and abasement that our skirts may be cleansed."

"She is penitent; no human soul ever grieved as she does—my poor, lost child!" cried Leonard, with a quiver of his massive chin.

The old man answered,

"Truly it rejoices us to hear this; but penitence, to be of sweet savor before the Lord, must be open, and the humiliation of sin complete. This is set down clearly in the platform of our faith. No form of regeneration to the culprit must be wanting—no degree of atonement omitted which our fathers have deemed essential to salvation."

"And what would you with the child?" faltered the unhappy father.

The unflinching reply was,

"It is the law that one offending like her shall confess her sins openly before the assembled society, and, standing with her head uncovered in the broad aisle of the meeting-house, ask pardon of God and the brethren for the reproach which has been brought upon both."

"And you ask my Amy to stand thus? Are you so hard with the poor lambskins of the flock? Must a sacrifice of shame be offered, before my child can kneel in the house of God again?" cried Leonard, with bitter anguish in his look and voice.

"Brother Downs," he added, "you have a grandchild, think of her, and have a little patience. Our wounds are fresh now; they ache and bleed at the first touch. Give us a little time, only a little time."

The old man shook his head. "Nay, brother Leonard, the work of the Lord cannot be put off. That which the platform layeth down must be accomplished. The girl you speak of is dear as the apple of my eye; but if she had offended like your daughter, I would not, for one mo-

ment, ask a suspension of the just laws which purify our society from sin."

The old man said truly. In the moral force of his religion he was a Brutus, and like him would have acted. But Leonard was, in truth, what the old man thought himself to be, a devout Christian; and, with such, mercy and tenderness stand side by side with justice. He could not protest against the laws to which both he and his daughter had subscribed when they were enrolled into the brotherhood of the church; but their significance had never seemed so terrible before. The thought of his child suffering all this humiliation lowered his strong soul to the dust.

And yet still some vague hope, springing out of Amy's still more vague words, prompted him to plead for a little time. To ask more than this he knew well would be in vain. Turning to the younger members of the committee, he urged this point upon them with an eloquence that at last prevailed. Some under strata of human kindness lay beneath their iron sense of duty; and, with many a word of hopeful consolation, they promised—should they find the girl penitent, as her father reported—to put off the day of her inevitable humiliation to the most distant period possible.

Here the conference in the saw-mill ended, and, in a body, the deputation moved toward the house, Leonard going first to prepare his wife and child for the cruel interview which was to follow.

Like mourners gathering for a funeral, these stern men seated themselves around the kitchen, each gazing fixedly on the floor at his feet; for, with all their stoicism, it was a painful duty they had come upon, and, even to the white-headed old man, the occasion was a mournful one.

The door which led to the inner room was closed, and a faint stir of garments could be heard within, but no word or whisper penetrated it from the group within. If they had expected to hear sobs and moans, nothing of the kind met them, but the stillness was far more distressing.

After a little the door opened, and Amy came forth, a little in advance of her parents. The frightened look, which so many had remarked before her secret was made public, had given place to a sweet, deprecating expression, which no mortal man could have met without throbs of compassion. She was pale, but it was the still, firm paleness of concentrated feeling, not the livid white that springs from fear.

"You wish to speak with me?"

Her tones were low, and gentle as a human

voice could utter; full of humility, but blended with something of self-respect.

The men who had come to judge her, saw that fair young creature standing before them in her meek dignity, and had nothing to say. Was this the aspect of guilt? Was that mild face, with no ideas save the acute shadows about the eyes, one that guilty passions had swept?

"Sit down," said the old man, clasping his hands on one knee, and clearing his voice, which, spite of himself, was a little husky.

Amy moved toward one of the splint-bottomed chairs that furnished the kitchen, and sat down. Then her mother came through the inner door, and placed herself close to Amy. She had been weeping bitterly, and her face was flushed; but the silence and imposing gravity of the committee held her in thrall. At last she spoke, but in a subdued voice.

"If she's done wrong, it's me that left her to it—me, and me alone, bro—gentlemen. When an old bird leaves her nest, over and over agin, afore the young ones know how to fly rightly, it isn't the poor little critter that should be punished, but the parent bird that didn't do its duty and keep watch. If you've got anything cruel to say, or hard that you want done, I sit here now ready to bear it all and do it all. If you want somebody to stand up in the broad aisle and confess that she's wicked as Satan, and wicked too, I'll do it next Sunday; and Joshua'll stand up and testify that it's all true, and my fault from beginning to end. Don't shake your heads and look strange, bro—gentlemen. I'll do it! You may set that hull committee of sisters on a row in the deacon's seat to look at me and I won't flinch. See if I do."

Tears, great bright tears, started into Joshua Leonard's eyes, as stars break through a stormy cloud. He had never known how much real greatness lay in the heart of his rosy, commonplace wife: so, out of all this pain sprang the blessing of a true companionship. He could never think of her but with reverence from that day forever; for, beneath the foam and drift wood of her nature he knew that pure waters always slept, ready to sparkle forth when self-sacrifice was wanted.

Leonard drew near his wife, and laid one hand tenderly on her shoulder. She looked at the committee with a glance of triumph.

"You see Joshua stands to what I say. He'll bear me out when I tell you that all the wrong that has been done in this house belongs to me."

"Mother," said a sweet, low voice, "let me

speak. The committee think that I have done wrong."

"Think!" exclaimed the old man severely, planting his cane on the floor, and folding both hands over it. "Brother Leonard, is this the penitence you promised?"

Leonard was about to speak, but Amy anticipated him.

"My father promises nothing that I will not perform. I am sorry, oh! you will never believe how sorry, for all that has brought trouble on my parents, and reproach upon myself! But you are Christians, and kind men; you cannot wish to condemn me more than I deserve. I am so young—so much in your power! Those who loved me once have turned against me now, and I have no friends to stand up for me—none but my father and mother, who, being good and blameless, might expect some mercy for their child."

The pathos of her voice and manner had its effect, where the words alone might, perhaps, have failed.

Even the old man's fingers began to quiver on the top of his cane, and the rest of the committee looked upon her with gleams of compassion, forgetting how guilty she was supposed to be.

"Do you ask a trial before the society? Is that what you want?" said the old man, in a softer voice than he had yet used.

"A trial!" she said, quickly. "A trial! with the right to bring evidence and speak for myself. Yes, yes, I will ask that. Give me four weeks—one little month. It is all I want. Then if you still condemn me, I will beg pardon of the brethren on my knees anywhere you shall point out; but have mercy on me just a little while, for my father's sake."

"Brother Leonard," said the old man, standing up, with the cane planted before him, on which he leaned with both hands, "the four weeks which this unfortunate child asks shall be given. What do you say, brothers? Shall we refuse time meet for repentance? For the sake of one good man God put off his vengeance on an iniquitous city; for our brother's sake we will wait also."

Joshua Leonard turned his face away. He could not endure that his friends should see how deeply their kindness touched him. The mother caught a glimpse of his emotion, and began to cry; but Amy looked into the old man's face with a faint smile, which made him lift one hand from the cane, for he forgot her crime in that innocent look, and was about to say good-by, in the usual way. But a thought of his position checked the impulse, and he

frowned heavily on her, that she might not
guess his weakness; and so the committee went
away, happier, it may be, from the gentle sym-
pathies that found sweet mastery even in their
iron convictions of duty.
(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

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REDMAN'S RUN.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

[Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by Frank Lee Benedict, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

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CHAPTER XI.

I HAVE only a dim recollection of the few days of excitement which succeeded that fearful night.

I can remember the coroner's inquest—recollect being examined, hearing the evidence of my cousin and the rest of the household, but it all appeared to me like a painful dream, from which I tried to rouse myself but could not.

At last the frightful reality thrust itself upon me! I was committed to jail in the county town, to await my trial for the murder of my uncle, Charles Redman.

When I found myself alone in my cell, heard the heavy doors clang together as the keeper went out, I fully realized the horror of my situation. I should not have been human had I preserved my fortitude during the torturing hours of that night.

I could not pray to God—he had deserted me. I had no friend on earth to whom I could turn for consolation. It could not be possible that I must die—I was so young, I had a right to look forward to long years of life! Then the terrible mystery of that threat, "The sins of the father shall be visited upon the child," recurred to me with a force which I had never before understood. Could I be atoning for the errors of that parent, whose memory had for so many years been to me a holy thing? I recalled every event of my past life—what sin had I ever committed that could deserve an expiation like that?

I could see no hope—the future was bounded by a few short weeks, beyond that no more of earth—nothing tangible or real, only the dark clouds that separate this life from the impenetrable mystery beyond.

I pictured to myself the horrors of the trial—I could hear my cousin's evidence, calm, self-possessed, and condemning me to death without a pang of remorse or a touch of pity.

Then the verdict—the judge's charge—I had never witnessed a similar scene, but it rose before me as real as any event that had already taken place. I could see the faces of the twelve

jurors—the familiar countenances of men who had sat often at my uncle's board, and whom I had been accustomed to consider my friends. I saw the judge, pitiless, stern—I heard the words pronounced which cut off the last faint hope—the words which fixed the day of my execution, and shrunk in horror from the faces of the crowd, who gazed upon me with loathing and dread.

Then I was in my cell again, chained hand and foot! The days dragged on, clanking against my heart heavily as my fetters struck the stone pavement of my prison. The long nights that had no sleep, nothing but frightful nightmares, in which friends taunted me with some unknown crime that horrified them, as my fancied guilt had done my fellow men.

Had this state of feeling continued I must have gone wholly mad, but, toward morning, I stretched myself upon the narrow bed and fell asleep, nor did I wake until roused by the entrance of the keeper carrying my breakfast.

He spoke to me cheerfully, I believe he was a good man, for, in the weeks that succeeded, I had only kindness to remember. After he had gone I knelt down and prayed. I wonder if my readers will comprehend the whole meaning in those words? I had not been a reckless or bad youth, but all my life long I had received heaven's benefits as my right; only now, in my agony and desolation, did it occur to me to return thanks for the past, and ask assistance in the terrible struggle before me.

I rose up calmed—from that moment no torturing doubt came back—I was resigned to my fate, and though I was too thoroughly convinced that there was no hope to be cheerful, I was calm and collected.

That was a busy day. I had many visitors, among them a lawyer whom I had known for years, and who offered his services in my behalf.

From him I learned that only three weeks would elapse before my trial—the spring courts meeting early in April.

I gave him as clear an account as possible of

the incidents of that day and night. At the mention of my quarrel with Maurice and my uncle, I could see that he felt how much the circumstance would tell against me.

"We shall see," he said, as he took his leave; "above all things, keep your spirits up—you are so young—"

"Do not give me any hope," I said; "I have none now—do not kindle one in my heart only to be crushed out."

Mr. Grant was silent for a moment. In spite of the hardening tendency of his profession he was a kind-hearted man, and my situation touched him deeply.

"You will want many things here to make you comfortable," he said; "make out a list of books and articles that you need, Mrs. Winship will bring them to you to-day."

I did as he requested, and, after a few more consoling words, he went away, leaving me to my solitude again.

How slowly the time passed! The tiny hands of my watch—my uncle's gift—seemed scarcely to move; I have had whole weeks pass more rapidly than did the next two hours.

At length, the door was again unlocked and the keeper entered, admitting Prudence and a numberless variety of commodities, which she had considered essential to my comfort.

I never heard a cry of agony like that with which she threw her arms about me, pulled me down upon the floor beside her and rocked her body to and fro, kissing me passionately with a torrent of broken words.

"Oh! my Paul, my little Paul, my nurseling, my own boy! Oh! it isn't true—I must be dreaming! My Emily's child—I can't live—I can't live!"

Her wild distress did not shake my calmness, although there were tears even in the eyes of the keeper as he turned away.

"Don't cry so, Prudence," I said, trying to encourage her with a hope which had never for a moment soiced myself; "Mr. Grant is very certain it will all end well—don't cry."

"He's a blessed man!" sobbed Prudence. "I've been down on my knees to him—oh! Paul, my little Paul!"

She groaned aloud in agony, deep as a mother could have felt for her own child, and it was long before she could be sufficiently calmed to hold anything like a rational conversation.

"Tell me how everything goes on," I asked; "it seems to me as if I had been here ages. Where is Maurice?"

"The villain, the bloody-minded villain!" she exclaimed, her grief changing to angry

fury. "I believe that man murdered your uncle!"

"Hush! hush, Prudence; you must not say that—there is not the shadow of possibility that such should have been the case—you will only get yourself into trouble by such language."

"Yes, I know it, Mr. Grant told me! I have got to be quiet, he depends so much on what I can say; I will save you, indeed I will, Paul! Who knows you like me? Haven't you been an angel all your life—don't I know you couldn't have the heart to hurt a fly! I'll tell them that, Paul; oh! they shan't hang you—old Prudence can save her boy."

"Where is Maurice now?" I asked again.

"He went to the city this morning, and took that old fool Morgan with him."

"And the—the body, Prudence?"

"They buried it yesterday," she sobbed; "don't you see my black dress? Oh! my poor Master Charles—my Emily's brother! I know he had his faults, but he didn't deserve such an end; he was always good to the old woman, very good."

"Do you know of any enemies he had?" I asked.

"No," she replied; "oh! Mr. Grant asked me all them questions. But everybody's dead that could have wished him harm, and 'tisn't no use to disgrace his memory with raking up old stories over his grave."

"No, Prudence, no—say nothing that you know of the past—don't even give a hint."

"I won't, Paul, unless it'll help you—then nothing should stop my tongue."

"It would do me no good. My knife was found on the ground beside him; who could have taken that from the drawer?"

"Nobody but Maurice! I tell you—"

"You must not say those things—you will only injure your own evidence."

"I won't speak his name agin," she exclaimed, "not if I have to seal my mouth up to keep the curses back."

"I see you have brought me some things," I said, to change the current of her thoughts, "you are very thoughtful."

"Don't say it, Paul, don't speak so gently, it'll kill me! There's everything I could think on, and Susan helped me—you remember Susan, the housemaid—the best girl, she's cried herself sick."

"You must tell her from me to keep her courage up—you see how quiet I am—surely, the rest can bear it if I am able."

"Jest like my blessed Emily, she was an

angel, no wonder you're so good. Oh! them men—them wretches!"

"Have you remembered the books, Prudence?"

"Here they be, every one that was on your shelves. There's the poetry things you used to read to me—oh! dear, dear."

I turned over the familiar volumes and began arranging them on my little table.

Prudence watched me going about so calmly, until she grew quiet herself.

"There's paper and pens, I knowed you'd want to write. And there's bed clothes——"

She broke off abruptly, and darted toward my poor little pallet.

"It's hard as a rock," she exclaimed, indignantly; "and what a piller, why it's like putting a grave-stone under your head," and she gave the offending pillow a hearty shake, as if she thought it could feel her anger, and tossed it across the floor. She began spreading out the soft blankets and sheets she had brought, arranging the bed according to her exaggerated ideas of comfort, muttering all the while in her old fashion,

"Did they think you had been used to sleeping in a garden patch, I wonder? I'll give the hull on 'em a piece of my mind. There, that's better—there's your own nice blankets, and the coverlet you used to think was so pretty when you was a little boy. It was in the best bedroom then—you always called it the 'pictur quilt'—I kept it nice just 'cause you liked it. Oh! to think I should live to spread it on your bed in such a place as this!"

She sat down on the half-made couch, cried a little more; but as I busied myself steadily on my books, she calmed herself again and went on with her task.

"There, it's all right now, and they've got to let me come and make it every day; you never would let anybody else touch your bed, and 'tain't likely you're going to begin now in all this trouble. Here's the very things you like to eat—I baked this mince-pie a purpose—oh! my poor heart—oh! my Paul!"

Down she dropped on the floor, still clutching the pie, and weeping over it in a way at once so ludicrous and pathetic, that I laughed and cried in the same breath.

"I'm an old fool," she said, gathering herself up, "I know I am; but who can blame me? And to see you bear it so like an angel! And here's the strawberry preserves—the very berries you helped me pick! Maurice never shall eat 'em, I'll throw the pots out of the winder first."

"I am going to write a letter now," I said, "and I want you to send somebody to town with it."

"I will, and it shall go safe, if I carry it myself and walk every step of the way."

I sat down and wrote to Alice, a long, quiet letter, one which I knew could not fail, in a measure, to alleviate her suffering. The agony I endured during the writing is beyond expression, but there was no trace of it in those pages.

When I had finished the letter, I folded it up and gave it to Prudence. The old lady put on her spectacles and slowly spelled out the direction. When she read Alice's name her grief was renewed with added force, for she knew something of our secret, and had made herself very happy over our mutual affection.

"The poor girl'll die, I know she will; they'll have another murder to answer for."

"Be sure that the letter goes, Prudence."

"I'll send Susan with it—she was a talkin' about going down to see her mother, and that'll jest do. I suppose we'll all be sent off from the house."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you think we'd stay in a house where that Maurice was master? Any of us would starve first."

"Has a will been found?"

"Didn't I tell you? Your uncle's partner had it—one he made a good while ago—everything's left to Maurice—jest a mean bit to you."

"My uncle had a right to do as he pleased."

"Don't tell me it was right, I won't hear it! But the money'll never do Maurice any good, it will be a curse to him."

"You were remembered, were you not?"

"Indeed I was, and beautifully. Oh! Master Charles loved his old nurse! If he'd only been fond of you, I could have forgiven him everything else."

"He could not force affection."

"I tell you, Paul, there's something wrong somewhere! If we only knowed the truth, it might help you now."

I thought of the letter I had found, but I remembered my uncle's explanation, I could not doubt it now! Upon that subject I must be silent, it would only bring disgrace upon my dead father.

"It would be useless, Prudence, in any way to refer to my uncle's past—by your love for his memory, I conjure you not to do it."

"I won't, indeed I won't! I know it could not do any good; don't be afraid, Paul, you can trust old Prudence."

We heard the keeper unlock the door. The

harsh grating of the key always sent a deeper chill to my heart, than any other of the painful details which constantly reminded me that I was a prisoner.

"The time is up, ma'am," said the man, respectfully; "I cannot let you stay any longer now."

"I hain't been here a minit," returned Prudence, disconsolately; "I can't leave him yet."

"You have been in full two hours; you can come to-morrow, you know; I'm sorry, but I have to live up to orders."

"I wish they'd jest lock me up too! I don't want to be free, if they're going to keep that poor lamb shut up here. How can I go, Paul?—how can I go?"

It was some time before I could soothe her again, but at length she, in a measure, comforted herself with the thought that she could visit me on the morrow. That parting was very painful to both. I loved Prudence greatly, and her very peculiarities, which would have seemed so ludicrous to another, only made me more fond of her.

So, with many tears and embraces, she went out at last, leaving me saddened by her frantic sorrow.

The next day my cousin Maurice wished to see me, but I refused. I could not meet him—deep as was the misery and degradation into which I had been plunged, I could not endure his false protestations of sympathy, when so certain that in his heart he rejoiced at the evil which had befallen me. I remembered the threat which he had several times repeated, and I had always a feeling, wrong I knew, but which I could not conquer, that his hatred had some share in my misfortunes.

When Mr. Grant called, he brought me a note from Maurice, expressing the utmost sympathy, and reiterating his desire to visit me.

"Not now," I said; "later, perhaps, but I cannot see him now."

"His grief for his uncle seems to be extreme," was the lawyer's remark, "he meets with a great deal of sympathy, and his conduct in regard to you is marked by much forbearance and pity, although he professes to believe you guilty, and says that he cannot shrink from his duty."

I knew well the meaning of those words. He would never rest until I was beyond the power of interfering with his plans; when I was once removed, he fancied that Alice would be within his reach.

The thought was agony, I could not dwell upon it! The sharpest pang in death would be

that reflection—the recollection of Alice's misery would haunt me into eternity.

CHAPTER XII.

THE days wore into weeks—the spring sunshine played in at the grated window of my cell during the long afternoons, and its pleasant light was one of the most painful reminders of my captivity.

All my life, the spring had been to me the saddest season of the year, the fullest of melancholy and unrest, now it filled me with an unutterable impatience impossible to subdue. My thoughts kept wandering to the old woods I had so often haunted—I could scent the flowers I had gathered—could recall distinctly each nook and haunt of the forest that I had visited. There was a hardy, foreign vine that grew over one of the library windows of the old house, which used to blossom early in May, filling the whole room with its fragrance; very often in my cell, that peculiar odor came to me with such strength that I could not think it was only fancy. For a moment I would be cheated into the belief that the past weeks had been a horrid dream, that I was waking, and should find myself lying on the couch in the library, as I had so often done, the flowers tapping against the window like fairy hands beckoning me out into the sunshine, and the birds singing gayly in the great maple tree beyond.

Some dreadful recollection of that night would rouse me; my uncle's face would haunt me, pallid and blood-stained, till I shrank tremblingly away, so white and frightened, that had any one seen me it would have been considered a proof of my guilt.

My twentieth birthday passed in that prison, the era I had so long looked forward to as the time when a complete change should come upon my whole life—truly, it was there, and just beyond death and eternity loomed up.

But as the period for my trial approached I grew more calm; not that I had any hope, but I was grown so weary that I almost longed for the time to come when a violent death should free me from suffering. The thought of a life-long imprisonment I could not endure. I had extorted a promise from the few friends left me, that, if condemned to death, they would not use any effort to obtain an amelioration of my sentence—I could trust to God's mercy hereafter—I could not support man's cruelty in the living death which such a fate would bring upon me.

As the time drew near, I could see that Mr.

Grant had little hope of saving me. Indeed, I think that as proof accumulated, there were moments when in his heart he believed me guilty.

Prudence visited me daily, her tenderness and devotion seemed constantly to increase. Alice had been confined to her bed for several weeks, very near death at one time I gathered from Prudence's disclosures, although she fancied that she had kept the secret perfectly.

At length, Alice was well enough to write me little notes, which reached me through dear old Prudence. The brave girl did all in her power to encourage me, but I could see that she had little hope, and I knew that my condemnation would be her death warrant.

Prudence had left the old house and taken lodgings in the town, and every moment that she was permitted was spent with me.

I was much annoyed by visitors. Scores of people, impelled by vulgar curiosity, came to stare at me through the gratings of my cell.

The very calmness I displayed was considered a proof of my depravity. People discovered the most villainous propensities in my face; and the newspapers displayed abominable portraits, which they asserted were truthful likenesses of myself.

Popular feeling was greatly excited against me; the most ridiculous stories of my past life were repeated and believed, growing into such magnitude and atrocity, that they would have been more applicable to a fiend than a human being.

I read and wrote a great deal. Prudence brought me every day beautiful flowers, which gave my cell quite a festive appearance. I do not know if that state of feeling could have continued long, but, except at intervals, I was strangely composed. I think it must have been unnatural, almost lethargic—it seemed to me that a speedy death would be the most fortunate thing which could happen.

Even if acquitted, I believed that the stigma of the accusation would blight my whole life, and I preferred to leave it at once, rather than drag through long years a marked man, shunned by those who had formerly known me—no place so distant that evil reports would not follow—no career open which would not be blasted by terrible suspicions springing out of the past.

Again and again Maurice petitioned me to see him, and Mr. Grant advised me to gratify his wish.

"It can do no good," I said; "it will be only an added pain to no avail."

"It would, perhaps, be well," the lawyer replied; "your cousin seems to me a very singular man. If not absolutely revolting to your feelings, I wish you would let him visit you."

"So be it," I said, too weary to be firm in my opposition. "Let him come to-morrow. Shall you be here?"

"He wishes to see you entirely alone."

"To-morrow then. Please do not say any more about it, I want to think of something else."

The next day, at the hour appointed, Maurice entered my cell. I was writing at the table—for a few moments the sight of him so overpowered me that I could only sit in silence: then he came toward me holding out his hand.

I did not notice the gesture, staring vacantly into his face with a rush of mingled feeling, fuller of bitterness and horror than had troubled me for weeks.

Maurice was changed. He looked pale and thin, and his eyes had a restless expression very different from their former bold lustre.

"You wished to see me," I said, at length, "and I have gratified your desire. Will you tell me what motive you had for this visit?"

"Surely it is not strange that I should have been anxious to come," he replied, "you are my only living relative."

"You did not formerly regard the relationship in any very favorable light."

"Can you still remember those boyish quarrels and disagreements? I should think that in a time like this they would all be forgotten."

"They were no boyish quarrels," I answered. "Maurice, you have hated me all your life, I do not believe that your feelings have changed, or that your nature has altered."

I spoke hotly, and with a degree of scorn which touched him. I saw the color mount to his forehead, and he bit his lip angrily.

"You are in a singular frame of mind," he said, "for one in your position."

"Because the sight of you reminds me of all that I have suffered—all the wrong that you have done me."

"I have quite as much to complain of as you! I should scarcely suppose that you would reject any evidence of kindness."

"Why are you here to offer it?" I asked. "You profess to believe me guilty of our uncle's murder—you can feel no sympathy for me."

"But I can pity you, Paul! The same blood runs in our veins, I cannot see you in this awful situation without having my heart wrung to the core."

"Yet you could bear witness which will condemn me to the gallows!"

"I was forced to tell the truth! I said not a word more than I could help, and each one I uttered fell like a death blow upon my own heart; but what could I do, Paul? I had taken an oath to speak the truth—I could only soften that which I had seen, I could keep nothing back."

"I have not blamed you. Is it to yourself that you are offering these excuses?"

"This state of mind is terrible!" he exclaimed, with a theatrical show of feeling very distasteful to me.

"You mistake," I replied, "I have no enmity toward you; but, during the time I may have to live, I wish to be at peace. Your presence distracts me and opens every old wound that ever bled in my heart."

"I am sorry," he said, apparently much pained by my words; "I did not mean my visit to rouse such feelings."

"I do not reject kindness, Maurice. If it was a good impulse which brought you here, I am glad that you have come."

He seemed relieved by my words, and seated himself near the table at which I was sitting.

"Paul," he said, after a short silence, "I did not come merely to speak empty words of consolation, they would only be a mockery."

"What brought you then? No human being can offer me more."

"You are mistaken! I could have given you a hope weeks since, if you would only have consented to see me."

"A hope, Maurice, what do you mean?"

"More than that—the certainty of regaining your liberty."

"Have you a clue to the murderer? Why have you waited till now to make it known?"

"Hush, Paul, hush—do not speak of that!" he exclaimed, hurriedly, as if shocked by my hypocrisy. "Your guilt is too firmly established; nothing can help you there."

"Why then do you speak of freeing me? Have you lied to me, Maurice? Did you come to insult and torture me?"

"I can forgive your words, Paul—you would not be human if you felt otherwise! But I do offer you freedom—a means of escape."

"From imprisonment—from death?"

"If they would have taken bail, I should have removed you from the country at once; as it is——"

"Do you think I would have gone?" I exclaimed, indignantly. "I should have declared myself guilty at once; I would rather

die a thousand deaths than have fled from trial."

"That is madness, Paul, you cannot be serious! But now the trial must come on; you will be condemned—there is no help for it—nothing short of a miracle could save you."

"Then why are you here?"

"Because I have arranged a plan by which you can escape. No matter how—but a week after the trial you will be freed from this place—go to New York at once, and before twelve hours be on the ocean."

I sat looking full in his face while he spoke. His eyes never once met mine—he talked in a hasty, nervous manner very unlike himself.

"Do you think I will consent, Maurice? If I am condemned, I will meet my fate like a man—no more of such plans."

"You will not throw away your own life—you cannot."

"I will not stir a step! What would life be worth, Maurice? I should have no home, no name—I must be a wanderer, a fugitive. No, I prefer the scaffold to that!"

"You are talking wildly! Think of it a little! You are very young, life must be sweet to you."

"It would be the most terrible torture, overhanging by such a curse!"

"I should give you a sufficient share of my fortune to make you comfortable," Maurice continued, without paying any attention to my remark; "and by the terms of my uncle's will you would come in possession of a reasonable sum beside. Once in Europe, you could make yourself a home in Sicily; under another name you would be happy and prosperous——"

"And Alice?" I exclaimed.

He started at that name—through all the false sympathy which softened his features I saw the old hate surge up—I knew that, in his heart, Maurice was not changed. He might not wish me to die—there was too much disgrace in that—and I could be effectually removed where it would never be possible for me to cross his path without that.

"And Alice?" I repeated.

"Why do you speak of her?" he said. "Put away all thought of her—you could not chain her innocence to you——"

"Guilt! That was what you meant, why not speak the word? Then you do believe that I murdered Charles Redman?"

"That is an idle question, Paul, it is useless for us to discuss that point."

"Answer me, I say. Do you believe me guilty?"

"I cannot answer—I can only judge from

appearances! I saw you by my uncle's body—a knife on the ground covered with blood—oh! Paul, do not question me——”

He broke off with a shudder, and covered his face with his hands.

I went close to him and laid my hand upon his shoulder.

“And I saw my uncle struggling with a man, saw him fall, and his assailant run away.”

Maurice grew deadly white—cold drops stood upon his forehead, and his breath came gaspingly.

“If you could only prove that,” he said, at last, speaking with a violent effort; “if you could only give the slightest evidence—show a trace——”

“You know that I cannot,” I replied, slowly.

He shook off my hand and rose to his feet, still trembling from that strong emotion.

“This is terrible!” he said, struggling to regain his composure. “My nerves have been so shaken that it drives me nearly mad to recall the past weeks.”

“I have more strength,” I said, never once moving my eyes from his face. “Maurice, one would think it was you, not I, who was the criminal——”

He started back and stared wildly in my face.

“Think,” I continued, “if you were in my place, confined in this cell—death near you! Picture the nights of horror—that terrible scene constantly coming back, that dying man's groans——”

“For God's sake, stop!”

He sank into a chair, livid and faint, and many moments passed before he could calm himself.

“I have thought of all those things,” he said, at last, “and I offer you liberty. Can you refuse?”

“But if I am guilty, Maurice, those horrible recollections will not be left behind in this gloomy prison—they will follow me like ghosts—no place so secret they cannot intrude—no life so long that they will weaken or be dispelled. Day and night—month after month—year after year—haunted by that murdered face, those last mad struggles! And my dreams—think of the nights, Maurice, the long, terrible nights, with those cold eyes watching me—would not a life like that be worse than the tortures of eternity?”

As if impelled by some uncontrollable fear he sprang toward the door, but when his hand was on the lock, he seemed to recollect himself and returned.

“Don't think of it in that way, Paul! Tell

me that you consent—there will be no failure—I can free you.”

“Never, Maurice, never! I am innocent—let me die—my blood be upon the head of him who murdered my uncle, he will have a double crime to answer for.”

“I will come again,” he said, much agitated; “you will have had time to think of this——”

“Come no more!” I answered. “I am better alone.”

“Wait till after your sentence, you will feel then how sweet life is.”

“Not purchased at a price like that. Go, Maurice, go—if you meant kindly, I thank you. I would not die at enmity with you, or any human being—but leave me to myself.”

He would have spoken again, but I waved him impatiently away, and he left the cell with a few broken words of sympathy, scarcely intelligible as they fell from his quivering lips.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE days dragged on, but I received no farther communication from Maurice. I was told by Prudence that his painful position excited more sympathy every day; and the excitement against the alleged murderer increased in proportion.

It would be useless to linger over those sorrowful days. I do not know that their record will be of service to any human being, although I would fain believe that the recital of pain and suffering cannot but soften the heart of any who reads.

My trial was to commence in two days. I had an intense longing to have it finished. I foresaw that my sentence would be death, and I had determined to make one request—that my execution might take place at as early a day as possible.

That morning Prudence came at her usual hour to visit me; she was even more agitated than usual.

“Have you no letter for me?” I asked.

“None, Paul; but don't worry, please don't worry.”

“What makes you so pale, Prudence? What is the matter?”

“I said I had no letter, but——”

“You have heard from Alice—you have seen her. Haven't you, Prudence?—haven't you?”

“Yes, yes, and——”

“She is coming to see me? Bring her—quick, Prudence. Why are you here without her? Bring her, do bring her.”

Prudence went to the door and knocked—the

keeper opened it—she passed out, still it remained ajar. I saw a veiled figure beyond—it entered, stood upon the threshold. Then all consciousness passed from me. I did not faint, but I could only fall upon the floor as Alice approached, clasping the hem of her robe to my lips, crying like one in a delirium,

"Alice! Alice!"

I heard her repeat my name, adding every tender epithet that love and a woman's heart could invent. I felt her tears upon my cheek, her arms drawn close about my neck, but still I could only moan,

"Alice, Alice, you have come at last!"

Many moments must have passed before either could really realize the truth. The tears I had shed—the first during all that fearful time—at length relieved me. I could sit up, could hold her hands in mine, could press her to my heart, study that dear face, so changed and worn, and, in the sweet happiness, forget for a brief season the stern reality which lay around.

It came all too soon, the stern waking! I saw her glance about the narrow cell—felt the shudder which ran through her frame, the misery of the present was upon us both again.

"Don't look at the room, darling," I cried; "look at me, let me see your heart in your eyes."

"You are so pale," she said, wiping away her silent tears. "Oh! Paul, my own Paul!"

"Still yours, Alice, nothing is changed between us! There has been no suspicion in your soul——"

"You could not think me so base! I could sooner have doubted myself than you."

"That thought has been my consolation, Alice! In your heart my memory will be kept pure; no matter for the world's verdict, you will know that there will be no stain upon my soul to separate us in the hereafter."

"They will declare you innocent!" she exclaimed, "they cannot do anything else; a little time and you will be free."

"Do not hope that, Alice! I am resigned to my fate. Darling, human life is so poor a thing at the best; in the existence beyond, these very sufferings will increase our strength and happiness."

"They cannot take you from me, Paul—you must not leave me here alone!"

"It will be only for a few years at the most, Alice—a few years of waiting and hoping—in the hereafter it will be only God who can decide our destiny. Alice, we can trust to Him."

"But He will not forsake us here—Paul, I

know that He will not! I have had so little hope, but since I came into this dark prison it seems as if the angels had been whispering to me in the gloom. You will be saved, I know you will be saved!"

"Put all that aside, Alice, leave everything to Him who sees more clearly than we what is best."

"I cannot—I am weak, wicked—my heart will not be still. Let me hope, Paul, do let me hope!"

There she clung to me, and we wept and prayed together, till in the dimness of that room strength and peace came back to our hearts, and we stood up, calm and patient, as if good angels had indeed been near us in that fearful strait.

"Your letters have been like having a portion of yourself here," I said. "See, here is the table at which I have answered them."

She bent over and kissed it, not with a trace of human passion, but reverently as she might have bowed before a martyr relic.

"Here are the books we read together, Alice, my dear old Prudence did not forget me."

"She has been so kind, Paul, so brave! She came often to see me, and she looked like an angel of mercy to my poor mother and to me."

"And your mother?"

"Very feeble—she will not be with me long. She sent you a mother's blessing, she will see you soon."

"Sit down here, Alice. Touch my books, smell these flowers. I want your trace upon everything, so that when you are gone I shall be no more alone."

"They look like the roses you gathered me once," she said, and the hot tears fell upon the fragrant flowers. "Oh! Paul, till now I could never believe that it was all real."

"Think of me only, do not speak of those things. I am calm, I only suffer at the thought of leaving you. I know that some day the truth will come to light, and justice be done to my memory."

"It will not be so long in reaching us, Paul—I know that it is not far off—it cannot be."

After a time I drew her thoughts away from that harrowing theme, and from our long interview both derived strength and consolation.

At last there was a knock at the door, and poor old Prudence begged for entrance.

"Let me see him too for a little," she pleaded; "I want to see you both together."

She came toward us as we stood, Alice

clinging to my side. The old woman laid her hands upon our heads, and her lips moved in a silent blessing.

"I try to leave it to God," she sobbed, "but it's very hard, oh! it's very hard! Oh! Miss Alice, he is so patient, so gentle."

"You two will love each other for my sake," I said.

"Don't, don't!" pleaded Prudence. "It's too much—oh! it is! I love her next to you, Paul, and I'll save her, that man shall never do her any harm."

"Have no fear of him, Prudence," answered Alice, "he has done me all the wrong that lies in his power."

"The sarpiat'll meet his dues yet! There, Paul, I know it's wicked, I won't say another word, indeed I won't! Have I made it a little home-like, Alice?"

"Very, Prudence. No one but you could have done so much."

"I'm a poor critter," she moaned, "good for nothing! I love him so, and not a thing can I do to help him."

"You promised me not to think of these things, Prudence."

"I won't, Paul—I try not to! But they will come at night, and I lie trying to find some means of saving you! Any how, the old woman can't last long, that's my only comfort. I've seen 'em all go one after another—Miss Emily, Master Charles—and now this lamb! I was resigned once, God has a right to do what he pleases with his own; but, I tell you, I ain't agoing to lay man's cruelty at His door!"

"Are you going back to-night?" I asked of Alice, wishing to change the conversation.

"I must, for mamma's sake. I shall come soon again; we will both come."

"And very often—"

"Paul, if the worst comes, we will neither of us leave you. No matter what the world says—we have decided—nothing shall separate us till the last."

Prudence sat down upon the bed and hid her face in her apron, moaning at intervals. Alice was weeping gently, but her holy courage had returned, and it strengthened me.

They were forced to go at last. I pray God, that few human beings may have to endure the agony of a parting like that. We think the separation of death terrible, but it is little to the woe of moments like those.

But it was over! They were gone, and I sat alone in my cell, waiting for the morrow to come, the last in which I should have any part in the concerns of earth. After that, I should

have thought only for the life to which human law would soon consign me.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE morning of my trial came. I was conducted from the jail to the court-house, a couple of officers riding in the carriage with me.

When they first seated me in my place, and I looked round upon the crowd of faces—the eager eyes all fixed upon me—the cold, impassible judge, the twelve jurors, a singular agitation disturbed me. I clasped my hands tightly over my seat to repress every sign of emotion, and very soon the feeling passed away.

When I could look about again, I recognized many familiar faces, but so changed. I saw the witnesses, my cousin and Mr. Morgan prominent among them, and poor old Prudence weeping bitterly, a little way off.

The district attorney opened the case with great ability. I listened to all the proceedings with a strange interest, not seeming able to understand that I held the chief part in the exciting scene.

Several witnesses were examined—the servants—people in any way cognizant of the tragedy, and I could feel how all the evidence accumulated against the prisoner—still scarcely realizing that it was myself—rather, that I was separated from my own identity, and watched the proceedings as any spectator.

My cousin was called upon the stand at last. I could not recall all his evidence, and it would be unimportant. As well as I can remember, this was the substance of the latter part of it.

With apparent reluctance, Maurice related the scene in the study, not violating the truth, but giving every particular a false coloring. He said that I was reading a paper which Mr. Redman accused me of having stolen, and that it was while helping my uncle to take it from me, that I made the attack upon him.

As he uttered this lie his eyes met mine. I flashed a glance of scorn at him beneath which he covered; he still retained his sad composure, but his eyes never again wandered toward me during his examination.

He said that my uncle had expelled me from the house—that in my passion I had avowed my intention of using the paper against him—that I had threatened both in the most violent manner, and had finally been locked in my chamber. He said that late that evening, he was sitting at his window, he saw my uncle leave the house, as was frequently his habit: after a time I followed. At first he thought only that I meant

to escape. After a few moments of reflection he rose to go out, when he heard a cry partially drowned by the roar of the torrent; then it was he roused the household, and they all rushed down to the Run, where they found me as has been before described.

Mr. Morgan's evidence corroborated all this, as did that of the other servants.

When my defence came, and Prudence was called upon the stand, she was much excited, but her evidence was clear and distinct, the most artful cross-examinations did not succeed in confusing her. She related much that was very unfavorable to Maurice—told of the quarrel between him and my uncle; and swore that when my uncle left my room that evening, after a long conversation, that he had assured her that he was satisfied in regard to my conduct, adding,

"I wish the other one had never made me any more trouble."

I could see Maurice bite his lips, and grow still paler when she recounted his drunken frolics, his using money entrusted to him by my uncle, but she was interrupted as quickly as possible, although I could see that all she had said had, in a measure, been favorable to me.

I cannot recount the proceedings. The whole affair seems to me like a terrible dream, and I cannot endure the pain of detailing it step by step.

For three days it went on. There was no longer left the slightest hope.

At length the summing up of the evidence came on—the judge's charge, and then the jury slowly retired.

An hour went by. I realized nothing—thought of nothing.

I knew that several times Mr. Grant bent over and whispered to me, but, though I heard his words, I could not attach any meaning to them, staring coldly at vacancy.

The hum of the crowd swelled up. It was strange to me that they could appear so excited. I felt as if my heart would never beat again, that it was only a human automaton they would sentence to death.

The door opened, the jurors returned to their places. Every sound died—a terrible silence pervaded the room—it was as if every pulse had ceased to throb, and could not again stir until those fatal words were pronounced.

The question came at last,

"Guilty or not guilty?"

The foreman of the jury rose—his lips were open to speak—the question was repeated.

At that moment a cry rose near the door, a woman's voice full of agony,

"Not guilty! not guilty!"

As in a dream, I heard the tumult which rose, saw the throng divide, beheld a tall, pale woman, looking like a spirit sent to protect me. She was leaning upon the arm of a venerable-looking man, she pressed eagerly through the crowd, and again I heard her voice,

"Not guilty! The murderer is here!"

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

THE WAY TO KEEP HIM.

BY MARY E. CLARKE.

"Out again to-night?" said Mrs. Hayes, fretfully, as her husband rose from the tea-table, and donned his great coat.

"Yes, I have an engagement with Moore; I shall be in early, have a light in the library. Good night," and, with a careless nod, William Hayes left the room.

"Always the way," murmured Lizzie Hayes, sinking back upon a sofa, "out every night. I don't believe he cares one bit about me, now, and yet we've been married only two years. No man can have a more orderly house, I am sure; and I never go anywhere, I am not a bit extravagant, and yet I don't believe he loves me any more. Oh! dear, why is it? I wasn't rich, he didn't marry me for money, and he must have loved me then—why *does* he treat me with so much neglect?" and with her mind filled with such fretful queries, Lizzie Hayes fell asleep upon the sofa.

Let me paint her picture as she lay there. She was a blonde, with a small, graceful figure, and a very pretty face. The hair, which showed by its rich waves its natural tendency to curl, was brushed smoothly back, and gathered into a rich knot at the back; "It was such a bother to curl it," she said; her cheek was pale, and the whole face wore a discontented expression. Her dress was a neat chintz wrapper, but she wore neither collar nor sleeves: "What's the use of dressing up just for William?"

Lizzie slept soundly for two hours, and then awoke suddenly. She sat up, glanced at the clock, and sighed drearily at the prospect of the long interval still to be spent alone before bed time.

The library was just over the room in which she sat, and down the furnace flue, through the registers, a voice came to the young wife's ears: it was her husband's.

"Well, Moore, what's a man to do? I was disappointed, and I must have pleasure somewhere. Who would have fancied that Lizzie Jarvis, so pretty, sprightly, and loving, could change to the fretful dowdy she is now? Who wants to stay at home to hear his wife whining all the evening about her troublesome servants, and her headache, and all sorts of bothers? She's got the knack of that drawling whine so

pat, that, 'pon my life, I don't believe she *can* speak pleasantly."

Lizzie sat as if stunned. Was this true? She looked in the glass. If not exactly dowdy, her costume was certainly not suitable for an evening, even if it were an evening at home, with only William to admire. She rose, and softly went to her own room with bitter, sorrowful thoughts, and a firm resolution to win back her husband's heart, and, then, his love regained, to *keep* it.

The next morning, William came into the breakfast-room, with his usual careless manner, but a bright smile came on his lip as he saw Lizzie. A pretty chintz, with neat collar, and sleeves of snowy muslin, and a wealth of soft, full curls, had really metamorphosed her; while the blush her husband's admiring glance called up to her cheek, did not detract from her beauty. At first William thought there must be a guest, but glancing he found they were alone.

"Come, William, your coffee will be stone cold," said Lizzie, in a cheery, pleasant voice.

"It must cool till you sweeten my breakfast with a kiss," said her husband, crossing the room to her side; and Lizzie's heart bounded, as she recognized the old lover's tones and manners.

Not one fretful speech, not one complaint, fell upon William's ear through the meal. The newspaper, his usual solace at that hour, lay untouched, as Lizzie chatted gayly on every pleasant subject she could think of, warming by his gratified interest and cordial manner.

"You will be home to dinner?" she said, as he went out.

"Can't to-day, Lizzie, I have business out of town, but I'll be home early to tea. Have something substantial, for I don't expect to dine. Good-by," and the smiling look, warm kiss, and lively whistle, were a marked contrast to his lounging, careless gait, the previous evening.

"I am in the right path," said Lizzie, in a low whisper. "Oh! what a fool I have been for two years! A 'fretful dowdy!' William, you shall never say that again."

Lizzie loved her husband with real wifely devotion, and her lip would quiver as she thought of his confidence to his friend Moore; but like a brave little woman she stifled back the bitter

feeling, and tripped off to perfect her plans. The grand piano, silent for months, was opened, and the linen covers taken from the furniture, Lizzie thinking, "He shan't find any parlors more attractive than his own, I am determined."

Tea time came, and William came with it. A little figure, in a tasty, bright, silk dress, smooth curls, and oh! such a lovely blush and smile, stood ready to welcome William, as he came in; and tea time passed as the morning's meal had done.

After tea, there was no movement, as usual, toward the hat-rack. William stood up beside the table, lingering, chatting, till Lizzie also rose. She led him to the light, warm parlors, in their pretty glow of tasteful arrangement, and drew him down beside her on the sofa. He felt as if he was courting over again, as he watched her fingers busy with some fancy needlework, and listened to the cheerful voice he had loved so dearly two years before.

"What are you making, Lizzie?"

"A pair of slippers. Don't you remember how much you admired the pair I worked for you, oh! ever so long ago?"

"I remember: black velvet with flowers on them. I used to put my feet on the fender, and dream of blue eyes and bright curls, and wish time would move faster to the day when I could bring my bonnie wee wife home, to make music in my house."

Lizzie's face saddened for a moment, as she thought of the last two years, and how little music she had made for this loving heart, gradually weaning it from its allegiance; then she said,

"I wonder if you love music as much as you did then?"

"Of course I do. I often drop in at Miss Smith's for nothing else than to hear the music."

"I can play and sing better than Miss Smith," said Lizzie, half pouting.

"But you always say you are out of practice when I ask you."

"I had the piano tuned this morning. Now, open it, and we will see how it sounds."

William obeyed joyfully, and, tossing aside her sewing, Lizzie took the piano-stool. She had a very sweet voice, not powerful, but most musical, and was a very fair performer on the piano.

"Ballads, Lizzie?"

"Oh! yes, I know you dislike opera music in a parlor."

One song after another, with a nocturne, or lively instrumental piece, occasionally, between them, filled up another hour pleasantly.

The little mantle clock struck eleven!

"Eleven! I thought it was about nine. I ought to apologize, Lizzie, as I used to do, for staying so long; and I can truly say, as I did then, that the time has passed so pleasantly, I can scarcely believe it is so late."

The piano was closed, Lizzie's work put in the basket, and William was ready to go up stairs; but glancing back, he saw his little wife near the fire-place, her hands clasped, her head bent, and large tears falling from her eyes. He was beside her in an instant.

"Lizzie, darling, are you ill? What is the matter?"

"Oh! William, I have been such a bad wife! I heard you tell Mr. Moore, last evening, how I had disappointed you; but I will try to make your home pleasant, indeed I will, if you will only forgive and love me."

"Love you! Oh! Lizzie, you cannot guess how dearly I love you!"

As the little wife lay down that night, she thought,

"I have won him back again! Better than that, I have learned the way to keep him!"

THIS SIDE AND THAT.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

Mrs. MUNSON would go to Europe! Now anything that Mrs. Munson decided upon doing, the fates usually regarded as settled; so it came about that, in spite of old Munson's grumbling and expostulations, preparations for the journey went rapidly forward.

Mrs. Munson's life had been directed toward one great object—the worldly advancement of herself and those connected with her. Thirty years before, she had carried a milliner's band-box in the Bowery, and worked as faithfully as woman could; but when her duties took her into a more stylish part of town, and she caught glimpses of the fashionable world of that period, she inly vowed that one day she too would ride in a private carriage, and with that she grasped her band-box more tightly, and hurried with renewed energy about her business.

At that time, Eleazer Munson was an errand boy in a Bowery grocery store, just opposite the milliner's where Susan James was apprenticed. She was by no means an ill-looking girl; out door exercise gave her a fresh, healthy color, and her saucy black eyes and white teeth made a deep impression upon the youthful Munson.

I have no leisure to dwell upon the early loves of the worthy pair. Suffice it to say that Miss Susan reciprocated the young man's passion, which she never would have done had she not seen in him the same energy and perseverance which characterized her own nature. The two were married when Eleazer became a clerk, and made themselves very happy in a ten by twelve room, "three pair back."

In process of time, Munson became proprietor of the very grocery where he had served as boy of all work; he and his wife lived in the little den back, and sold cabbage and carrots in front. Mrs. Munson attended to her house, and worked her way up in the milliner's shop after a fashion that would have astonished any less energetic person.

They toiled, they economized, they took advantage of circumstances, and the result was that Eleazer moved into a larger shop, and Susan passed up to the milliner's desk—the head of the establishment.

Children were born and died—sorrow and misfortune at times sat beside their hearth, but

they were never disheartened. The day came when they were rewarded for their labors! Susan sold out the bonnet shop, and Eleazer became a wholesale dealer down town.

By the time the only two children who lived had reached an age to take notice of their surroundings, they were living in a comfortable house in a respectable street, their father was on the high road toward riches, and their mother slaved night and day to educate them without infringing upon her husband's means.

Years and years went by! The milliner's shop was far in the past; no odor of cabbage lingered about their dwelling. Slowly and surely they went up—from one street to another—creeping on to wealth and respectability.

The two children were man and woman grown. Mr. Mortimer Munson had graduated at Columbia, and was now as elegant and useless a member of society as any fond mother could desire. Estelle was two years younger, and at seventeen she left Madame Choufleur's establishment as accomplished and helpless as it is proper for a young lady to be.

They had been reared as the children of such parents are sure to be in America. They had known nothing of the trials and struggles through which their father and mother had passed; they had never had a wish unsatisfied, nor had it ever occurred to them that any gratitude was due those who had borne so much for their sakes.

They had made pleasant acquaintances at their schools; Murphy (I fear some one of Mrs. Munson's ancestors had dug potatoes in the Emerald Isle) grew into Mortimer, and Esther glided into Estelle.

By the time school days were over, they lived in a brown stone house in Fourteenth street, and Mrs. Munson prepared to launch out into the career which had been her aim through life. Of course the elder Munson kept to his business, and was no more heard of than the rest of his class, whose wives and daughters take rank, or seek it in our American fashionable world. Mrs. Munson ruled her house and petted her children; outside all was glitter and magnificence, but the worthy female had by no means forgotten her old habits of prudence. The butcher's

bills were carefully cut down; the best china was not brought out for daily use; and though, at the proper time, dinners, parties, and the like, Mrs. Munson did not hesitate at expense, her household economy was something wonderful.

There might be those who sneered, and who hinted of the grocery shop, or the three pair back; but such jests are dangerous—in this country one never knows whose tender points may be touched—besides, too many men owed old Munson large sums for their wives and daughters to slight his family.

So Mrs. Munson pushed and fought her way into society, nor was she a whit more ridiculous than one half the rest who considered her as barely standing upon the confines of their greatness. Her house was elegant—furnished like theirs—in the best taste of the upholsterer—she had pictures quite as valuable as their own, and any of them would have thrown Turner into spasms; her son was a gentlemanly dandy, in no way different from the rest of his class, made up of shirt-collar and fancy studs, and any amount of small vices grafted upon native indolence and mediocre ability; and her daughter, if she ever really woke up, would make a charming woman.

Mrs. Munson, herself, was now a fine, stout woman, with sufficient claims to good looks left yet, no more "fussy" than the generality of American mothers—guilty occasionally of a solecism in grammar—grinding up a little the customary phrases in regard to books and paintings; but, on the whole, a tolerably fair specimen of a wide class in our blessed country.

But to Europe they must go, there was no help for it! Estelle dreamed of Italian sunsets, picturesque bandits, and the like; Mr. Mortimer of the conquests he should make among the Parisian ladies; and Mrs. Munson wished to go because everybody went, and she thought like another well known lady, "that a *Paury* trip gave a certain style and *distinguishment* to young people that nothing else could do."

So the house in Fourteenth street was shut up; the day came for the steamer to sail, and away floated Mrs. Munson, bearing her children in her wake.

I am not so certain that during the preparations, Estelle's feelings had been those of unalloyed delight. There was really more in her, as far as heart went, than she herself supposed. She had been wonderfully educated—what pupil of Madame Chouffeur's has not? She spoke French admirably, played the harp to perfection, and sang like a prima donna, entered a

room very gracefully, and danced like a fairy. She had the faults so common among American girls—she dressed too much, laughed too much, there was a little too much manner—metaphorically, she was on too extensive a scale. She had as many follies and caprices as such a girl can well have—the same visions of counts and dukes which haunt the brains of nearly all American females in their youth—but at the bottom of it all there was one little sentiment which she could not entirely smother.

Old Munson had a favorite clerk whom he insisted upon having well received at his house; and though his wife grumbled a little, she could not run counter to her husband's express commands.

So Ralph Hamlyn became a frequent visitor while Estelle was a school girl. In the end, Mrs. Munson liked him very much; Mortimer was jealous of his fine appearance, but had not the courage to show his dislike. Estelle grew accustomed to his society—at last she was surprised to find that a feeling, which no other man had been able to excite, had crept into her bosom. She reproached herself as any other well-bred girl would have done—a penniless clerk! She laughed at her own folly—flirted outrageously—insulted him in every way—yet when she met the haughty reproach of his eyes and heard his voice, her pride fluttered away, and she could but listen with more of womanly gentleness than she ever betrayed at other times.

But all that was over! There was an end to the quiet hours spent over the piano, the little talks in the conservatory! Estelle was on her way to Europe, certain that Hamlyn loved her, but philosophically determined that her share in the matter was enacted.

I pass over the trip, the sea-sickness, the fright, the landing at Havre at low tide—if any of my female readers have tried it, they can sympathize with Mrs. Munson's distress at descending the ladder "with all that nasty troop of Frenchmen a staring at her, and the wind quite turning her inside out."

The months in Paris were heaven! They were presented at court, and then and there Mrs. Munson's pride and ambition blossomed to its full—nothing less than a marquis for her daughter! They fluttered like numberless other Americans upon the outskirts of Parisian society—they made part of the motley group always to be found at the republican ambassador's, who never by any chance knows a French word—they talked with titled people to their heart's content—made all sorts of ridiculous mistakes, got into all manner of doubtful saloons, and

spent more money than Mrs. Munson would at one time have thought sufficient to support a king.

Mr. Mortimer did his part—he gambled—he haunted the stage of the opera house—he lent money to his titled friends—he was snubbed, laughed at, or caressed as it happened, all of which he took quietly, seeming like many others of his young countrymen, to consider both slights and attentions part of the “polishing off” process.

They made the usual tour, and were no more laughed at than their neighbors. Of course they mistook every man for a count—their countrywomen are wont to. Estelle did not run away with a courier in “dear, delightful Florence,” and only grew rapturous over one *matadore* in Spain, mistaking him for a prince, who was said to be stopping at the same hotel.

They had been abroad over a year, when some before unheard-of German springs bubbled into sudden notoriety, so along with the rest of the world thither went Mrs. Munson and her family.

They found a suite of rooms that had just been vacated by a Russian princess, very splendid and very comfortable, for which they paid a price something beyond belief.

“But,” said Mrs. Munson, “it’s worth your while to sleep in a bed where a live princess has slept.”

It certainly was more agreeable than sleeping in the couch of a dead one; and though there was a suspicious smell of cigarettes about the curtains, Mrs. Munson took it to be the true odor of royalty, and bore it beautifully.

“Everybody that one has seen seems to be here,” said Estelle, peeping out of the window upon the street crowded with gayly dressed people on their way to drink the waters. “Mamma, there’s that Neapolitan duke we saw at Florence—how delightful!”

“Oh! this is really living,” exclaimed Mrs. Munson. “How do people stand anything else?”

No vision of the grocery shop intruded upon her mind—a year on the Continent had buried its memory! Mrs. Munson had no dreams now, except those which glided about on palace floors and took titled people by the hand.

“This season will surely bring something decisive,” thought Mrs. Munson. “I don’t believe there’s so pretty a girl here as Estelle, and such *bone tone*! Eleazer grumbles so much about money—I really could not make head nor tail of his last letter—I’m sure I helped earn the money, and every penny I spend counts.”

That night there was a ball at the *cercle*, and

the ladies went escorted by the elegant Mortimer. They were squeezed and knocked about unmercifully; but then their toes were trodden on by hairy princes with unpronounceable names, and their laces torn by nobody under a count—of course it could be borne. They met many people whom they knew, and Estelle made quite a success, for fabulous accounts concerning her wealth had been spread abroad, and had produced their due effect. Neither was Mortimer without his conquests, and Mrs. Munson sat flushed with pride watching the triumphs of her children.

While she sat there, a distinguished-looking man of forty, covered with decorations, came toward the place, and leaning upon his arm was a lovely girl.

“These are the real sort,” thought Mrs. Munson, “there’s nothing lost by proper politeness,” and she moved a little, graciously motioning the young lady to sit beside her.

The offer was accepted with a profusion of French apologies, to which Mrs. Munson tried to respond; when she spoke bad English she fancied that she was conversing in a foreign tongue.

“You are much welcome—oh! oui—much heat-to-night!”

And she fluttered her fan, and grew quite warm with her efforts in the beautiful language. The young lady bowed, and the gentleman began conversing in very good English, evidently aware with whom he was talking, and paying her so many compliments, that Mrs. Munson was charmed and confused beyond expression.

“Clemence,” he said, to his companion, “I fear the princess will not come.”

The young lady murmured some reply, and he continued to Mrs. Munson,

“The Princess Chaswalder was to have taken care of my niece, the Countess Clemence d’Arville,” (Mrs. Munson took it as an introduction and bowed.) “She does not come—it is annoying, for I have an engagement with the Grand Duke of Hapel.”

Mrs. Munson’s breath was quite taken away by the list of noble names; she grasped her courage and faltered out,

“If your excellency chose to leave her with me—”

“So kind,” he said, “so gracious—and they were stopping at the same hotel—so delightful!”

Then followed an animated discussion in French between the niece and uncle, which the latter translated—the young lady could not force herself on madame’s goodness. But the upshot of the matter was, that the General de

Mirecourt—he said that was his name—was allowed to retire, and there sat Mrs. Munson, smiling and red, with a live countess under her protection for all the world to see.

There was a very singular expression in the half veiled black eyes of that countess, as she listened to her companion's unintelligible nonsense.

"Do you speak the English?" asked Mrs. Munson, in her best French style.

"I spik a little Englis," murmured the countess, in a voice that was like the cooing of a dove.

"Oh! *molto bon*," cried Mrs. Munson. "No, that's Italian," she added, to herself—and really believed it—then aloud, "*Je vis*, and do you comprehend English?"

The countess did with a little difficulty, and on flew Mrs. Munson's tongue, mangling French verbs, twisting English sentences, and putting in delicious Americanisms, while her companion listened with the utmost affability, and all the while that strange look in her eyes gleamed out through the amusement which sparkled there.

Mrs. Munson saw her son at a little distance: she beckoned to him, told the whole story in a breath to his great delight, presented him to the countess, who, with a beautiful mingling of maidenly modesty and courtly breeding, accepted his arm for a waltz.

That was a delightful evening for the whole family; they drove back to the hotel in wonderful spirits, with the countess in the carriage, talking to Estelle as freely as if she had known her all her life.

Mortimer went to his room madly in love. He had seen his destiny—he must win her or perish! Everybody knows what he felt, for everybody has been a fool some time in his life, so I need not be sentimental.

The next morning, the general called on Mrs. Munson to thank her for her kindness; Mortimer called to inquire after the countess; the young ladies met to cement their newly-formed friendship. A wonderful intimacy sprang up between the countess and the ladies, in which Mortimer had his share. Such a match for him, the mother and sister were wild at the thought!

The general casually mentioned the great fortune which his niece possessed—it certainly did not decrease their pleasure. In time it came out that the general was not always kind to her; Estelle learned that he did not wish her to marry, he would lose the control of her wealth. Estelle was sure she liked Mortimer; the young man believed it; but they must not be precipitate, (there Mrs. Munson's wisdom came in,) it

would not do to excite the general's suspicions. So they petted the countess and made much of her, and she returned their fondness with a delicious frankness, which spoke volumes for her heart.

But soon Estelle had dreams of her own, and Mrs. Munson's motherly heart was divided between the interests of her children.

There came a Spanish marquis to the baths; the general made his acquaintance, told Mrs. Munson of him, his vast wealth, his noble name, Montaldo, with more titles and estates than I can count, for I am not good at figures. He presented the marquis to the family and to his niece.

Such a charming young man—such a sad, poetical face, such glorious eyes, and such a black moustache! His manners were perfection; his style of dress so quiet and elegant; he spoke a dozen languages fluently; sang like a male angel, and talked in a voice that was music itself.

"I can't tell why," whispered the countess to Mrs. Munson, "but he is like our dear Estelle: be sure there is a sympathy between their noble souls."

"Oh! now he's come, you'll forget all the other men," said the mother, with dawning jealousy for her son.

"You are cruel," sighed the countess; "dear lady, I never forget!"

Mrs. Munson was profuse in apologies, her heart was touched.

"Shall I tell you a secret?" said the countess, with sudden girlish confidence and the old gleam in her black eyes. "I promised my dying father not to marry a nobleman; he wished me to become the wife of one who would take my name and title—it has been done in our family."

Mrs. Munson kissed her with tears in her eyes! Mortimer a count! it would almost give her a title; perhaps she would be called the countess mother-in-law! What would those odious de Lancys say when they heard of it?—they had snubbed Mrs. Munson; how different would it be when she returned to New York the mother of two titled children, with a sort of title herself!

The conversation was duly repeated—Mortimer took new hope. To do him justice, the few better feelings in his nature were really awakened: he would have married the dear girl without a cent. Still the idea of being a count was not unpleasant; perhaps Napoleon would make him one of his ministers!

The summer days flew on, and each one lifted the Munsons into a higher heaven of bliss. In

the midst of all the gayety and dissipation in which they, of course, took a share, the party, as Estelle said, lived in a little paradise of their own.

Such drives and pic-nics! The general said he could trust his niece with his dear friend Mrs. Munson, so his black shadow seldom loomed between Mortimer and his fair enchantress. The marquis and Estelle gathered flowers on one side; the countess and Mortimer walking arm in arm at a little distance; and Mrs. Munson, looking from one group to the other until her head grew actually dizzy, while the countess' companion and former governess, smiled continually and chattered like a magpie!

She had but one annoyance—Eleazer's letters. He talked openly now of retrenchment—he had met with severe losses—they must return—he could not send them such sums. Mrs. Munson trembled and would have drawn back, but the thought of her children deterred her, she could not sacrifice their prospects. A little while and all would be settled, both married, and then Mr. Munson should have no reason to complain of her extravagance. She did try to check Mortimer, for his expenditures were fearful; but, as he said, to dazzle the general was the only hope he had of winning Laure, and the mother was silenced.

In truth the general was quite a tax; he borrowed money, which Mortimer could not refuse; he urged him to gamble, and the youth invariably lost. Then several times he played with his prospective brother-in-law, and met with the same success. Twice at the public tables he encountered the marquis, when the latter had, in the most unheard-of, careless way, left all his money behind; of course Mortimer offered his purse, and neither time had the Spaniard remembered to repay him—it would appear shabby to allude to it, so it went like the rest.

One morning Mortimer descended to the countess's rooms for a call; there was no servant in the ante-room, and he passed through the salon to her boudoir, where she sometimes received, but never except in the presence of her dragon, Madame Thillon, her second mother, as she called her.

A sight met Mortimer's eyes which nearly frenzied him. Upon a couch lay the countess, sobbing and moaning in a paroxysm of hysterical distress.

"Laure!" he cried, forgetting all ceremony in his suffering.

She lifted her face, around which her black ringlets fell in disheveled masses, and uttered a faint shriek.

"You here!" she faltered. "Go at once! Do you not see that I am alone?—it is not proper—go!"

"I cannot! I will not!" he exclaimed, "until you tell me what troubles you!"

"Never," she gasped, "never—go at once!"

She was so lovely in her tearful pleadings that Mortimer's passion could no longer be restrained. He fell at her feet, clasped her hands in his, and told all his love in really beautiful style—oh! young America owes so much to the scores of French professors who crowd our shores.

"Je t'aime, je t'adore!"

But, Lord bless me! I'm not making love to a French countess, nor writing a French story, so let me translate his protestations into as intelligible English as love-making is capable of being put.

"I love you, Laure—my heart is at your feet—do not tread upon it," and so forth.

She turned away her head, and yet she listened. Her bosom heaved with repressed emotion, and she strove feebly to free her hands.

"Oh! leave me," she sighed at length, "I must not listen!"

"Do you not love me, Laure? Will you not speak a word—only one?"

At last she did—a faltering, musical answer that thrilled her listener's heart. He would have clasped her to his bosom, but she repulsed him with charming delicacy.

"No lips but those of a husband must touch this brow," she said; "dear Mortimer, respect my scruples!"

He nearly devoured her hands in his ecstasy—indeed they were pretty enough to eat—and then insisted upon knowing the cause of her distress.

"Do not ask me," she said; "why should I pain you with my griefs?"

"Are not your sorrows mine? Do you not love me, Laure?"

She could not resist his pleadings, and, in passionate words broken by sobs, told the story of her wrongs.

Her uncle treated her like a brute—he was squandering her fortune—he always opposed her marriage, because the moment she became a wife his control ceased. He threatened now to take her away from that dear place, nay more—

"Tell me all!" cried Mortimer, and she went on, crimson with offended pride.

"He is furious with me because I will not wed him. You know that in France such marriages are common; and he is only my mother's half brother."

A terrible execration burst from Mortimer's lips.

"I will challenge him—kill him!"

She calmed him at last; he vowed the most profound secrecy; it was their only hope, she said.

"But there is more!" he exclaimed; "what is that letter? Let me see it."

"No, I beg! I entreat! It is nothing—a trifle—*un petit misere*—yet it has made me more wretched than all the rest."

Finally all came out—the general had refused to pay her dress-maker's bill.

"It is enormous, I know," sighed the countess; "but I wished to appear well. Can you not think why?—oh! do not blame me!"

The enraptured youth fairly kissed her slipper. He begged for the privilege of paying it. She was shocked, indignant, almost insulted.

"No!" she cried; "you speak to a d'Arville, monsieur! I will sell my jewels—my mother's last gift—not a gem but is a memory of her—their very touch is a blessing—but they shall go!"

Mortimer expostulated and prayed; for a long time his words were unavailing.

"Grant me this proof of your love," he said; "show that you have confidence in my honor."

"Ah! you know well that is a plea I cannot refuse," she said, with renewed tears. "Have your will. I put away all pride, all reserve—Mortimer, I will be your debtor."

She was, indeed—the amount of the bill was startling. It took every cent he had that day drawn to pay debts for his mother; but he handed it to her with rapture; were he to pay the bill it might compromise her.

There were vows of secrecy, renewed pledges. Suddenly all the countess' delicate sense of propriety—the quality Mrs. Munson so much admired in her—came back.

"Alone with you!" she cried, clasping her hands tragically. "Go, I pray you! If my uncle were to see you here! What would my dear Thillon think, and she may come in at any moment? If you love me, go."

The youth tore himself away, at last; the countess had given him permission that he should inform his mother of their engagement, under a solemn promise of secrecy. When Mrs. Munson was growing angry to find that he had spent the money—how he could not easily tell—she was calmed by that heavenly intelligence—the countess had promised to become his wife. She actually flung her arms about his neck in her motherly delight, and wept quite as sin-

cerely, if not as gracefully, as the young lady had done.

"My own Murphy—I mean Morty! My darling, darling son! I am so proud, so happy! and I shall be the mother of a real count and countess!"

Other exciting intelligence was in store—that day was an eventful one to Mrs. Munson, seeming to usher, in the realization of her wildest dreams.

With the pleasant liberty of an American girl, Estelle had that morning been entertaining the marquis alone in the saloon.

He conversed beautifully: he told of his story-haunted chateau, his palace at Madrid, his longings, his search for perfection, and ended by saying that in her he had found all for which his enthusiastic heart so deeply pined.

The melody of his voice, the exaggerated passion of his words had their due effect; Estelle felt as if fascinated, yet in the very midst there came a memory of the quiet hours in the conservatory of her American home, and she could hardly tell whether to weep or be happy.

"Say that you will be mine!" pleaded the marquis; "I cannot leave you without hope—speak, dearest!"

Estelle faltered out the words; yet when he pressed her to his heart the tears would flow.

"May I seek your mother?" he whispered; "I cannot rest till I know that I may speedily claim you."

He went away and left her in a singular state of feeling; but she put the past resolutely aside as a foolish dream, and looked proudly forward to the brilliant future; felt the coronet already upon her brow, while its fancied light dimmed the purity and loveliness of her girlish visions.

The marquis entered the room, just after Mortimer had left his mother. The young Spaniard pressed his suit eloquently, and Mrs. Munson could hardly wait until he had finished before she consented.

"I offer your daughter one of the proudest names in Spain," he said, when all was arranged. "I do not ask fortune; I have never even inquired if she had wealth of her own."

"She will have a hundred thousand dollars the day she marries," said Mrs. Munson, magnificently.

"It must all be settled upon herself," he replied, with a kingly wave of the hand which seemed to sweep the trifle aside. "I shall settle twice that sum upon her, to say nothing of a palace in Madrid, and a castle in Andalusia, which will be deeded to her."

Mrs. Munson neither shrieked nor fainted; but it required a strong effort of self-control not to do both. When the marquis left, she flew to Estelle, and the extravagances she committed during the next hour would have convinced any stranger that she was a fit inmate for a lunatic asylum.

"Now come to the countess," she said, when they had somewhat quieted themselves. "So much happiness in one day—she has promised to become Mortimer's wife, but it is to be kept a profound secret."

The fair Laure received them with blushes and tears; she and Estelle wept in each other's arms; while Mrs. Munson extended her hands over their heads in a sort of theatrical blessing; and the worthy Thillon, a little in the background, murmured her delight.

The marquis would hear of no delay—a contract must be signed according to the Spanish fashion—the nuptials should follow as soon after as possible.

All the world knew that the Spaniard had won the rich Yankee girl. He made no secret of it, nor did Mrs. Munson.

A party of Americans, belonging to a clique who had formerly slighted them, were there, and did their best now to cultivate the family. How Mrs. Munson patronized them! Grandly she talked of her future son-in-law, and hinted of a great marriage her son was soon to make. Her countrywomen congratulated her, and hated her with all the spite of feminine natures.

The days went by like Roman triumphs to the dazzled Munsons. There was no end to the extravagances in which they indulged. Mrs. Munson sailed about like a queen dowager, and Estelle struggled between her dreams of grandeur and a dull heartache, striving to forget it in every species of excitement.

Letters came from old Munson enclosing checks; but informing his wife it was the last remittance he could send: to raise that he had sold stocks at an enormous sacrifice—he was so crippled that ruin stared him in the face.

Mrs. Munson caught at the checks, and threw the letters aside unread; she was just dressing for a ball, and had no time to spare.

The day came upon which the contract was to be signed. The affair was to be private, but Mrs. Munson had invited all her American acquaintances, that she might overwhelm them with the glory of her family.

The group was gathered in the saloon! Mrs. Munson flushed like her crimson brocade; Estelle pale as the pearls she wore; the marquis handsome as a young crusader; the coun-

less grace and perfection personified; the general dignified and decorated as usual; Mortimer restless with excitement; the other Americans fussy and funny as they are sure to be when anything unusual is going on; and the foreigners present calm and high-bred as icicles. Suddenly there was a commotion outside. A servant hastily entered and whispered to Mrs. Munson, that a gentleman must speak with her at once—a friend from America.

There was nothing for it but to see him, so she went out and found Ralph Hamlyn.

"I am in time," he said, hastily; "your daughter is safe!"

"Sir, are you mad?" she cried, with the air of Mrs. Siddons. "In yonder room wait twenty nobles to witness the signing of the marriage contract between my daughter and the Marquis Montaldo."

"Mrs. Munson, you must prepare yourself for terrible news. I had just reached Paris on business connected with your husband's house when I heard of this. I have lost no time in coming here; that marquis is an adventurer of the basest sort—I have the proofs in my possession—moreover, there is an associate of his here, a general something, whom the officers are about to arrest."

There had been a listener to his words; a woman crept out of the room and fled.

"You are crazy!" cried Mrs. Munson, furiously. "No, you are a base, mean slanderer—you wanted my daughter—it is jealousy!"

"Do not expose yourself—think of your daughter!"

"I won't—I will tell the marquis—he shall beat you to a jelly—oh! I've a mind to do it myself! Come, I say!"

"Not before strangers. Call your family here."

He ran out and bade a servant summon the marquis, the general, and Mrs. Munson's son and daughter, while the mother fumed and raged like a pent-up volcano.

Mortimer was not there, but the others came, the two men very pale, though dignified still.

When Estelle saw Hamlyn, she sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands: a premonition of the terrible shame in store had come upon her.

"Speak, marquis!" exclaimed Mrs. Munson; "kill that man—beat him! He says you are a scamp—and you too, general."

The pair tried to annihilate him with their looks; but Hamlyn stepped up to the marquis, showed him a paper, said a few words, and he shrunk away.

"As for you," he said, to the general, "I advise you to adopt another disguise and be off, the police are on your track for that last swindle of yours on a Frankfort bank."

The doughty general—the hero of a score of duels—uttered one oath and hurried away.

Mrs. Munson fell on the floor in strong hysterics, and Estelle cowered in her chair with her face still buried in her hands.

"As for you, sir," continued Hamlyn, "I could arrest you—for the sake of this family I will not. One thing you shall do, or nothing will prevent my punishing you. Go with me into the room where your friends are—say that I have just been sent from America by Mr. Munson—that he forbids this marriage, and threatens his daughter with disinherittance and his curse if it takes place, and that she has refused you—this will take all shame from her."

The marquis bullied and blustered, but Hamlyn was firm. The Spaniard appealed to Mrs. Munson—she only struck her head on the floor and shrieked,

"You are all as bad as you can be! No, I don't believe it—oh! I don't know what to say."

She went off in a violent paroxysm, and the marquis turned to Estelle.

"Mademoiselle——"

She dropped her hands, rose from her seat and looked full in his face.

"Go, sir—I forgive you this wrong—I have brought it on myself by my own folly—I only ask you to go."

She sank back in the chair, shrinking from Hamlyn's eyes. Mrs. Munson heard her words, she sprang to her feet.

"Estelle," she cried, "is he a scamp?" and her fingers worked nervously.

In a few words, Hamlyn exposed his villainies and showed the proofs. For years Mrs. Munson had been a lady, surrounded by the elegancies and refinements of fashionable life, but in that moment all was forgotten. She made a dash at the marquis and caught him by the hair.

"Oh! you wretch, you thief!" she shouted. "You vagabone, you sneak! I'll show you—I'll teach you!" and with every word she shook him so violently that his teeth chattered, and ended every epithet with a box on the ear which made him stagger.

With great difficulty Hamlyn released the unfortunate man, who would have run away, but Ralph's voice of command checked him.

"Let me beat him," cried Mrs. Munson, "do let me beat him! I'll break every bone in his Spanish body, the nasty wretch!"

"Mother," exclaimed Estelle, "stop—not a word more! Are we not sufficiently disgraced?"

Mrs. Munson buried her head in the sofa cushions, shrieked and writhed in strong convulsions, which nobody had time to heed.

"A few moments, Miss Munson," said Ralph, "and all will be over. Wait here, if you please."

She heard him but made no response; and when the two had gone out she sat there dumb, while her mother's insane ravings continued.

All was done as Ralph proposed; so naturally was it managed that the Americans really believed the story, and the party broke up.

When Hamlyn returned, Estelle was sitting just as he had left her, and Mrs. Munson, quite exhausted by her struggles, was feebly moaning among the sofa cushions.

"All is settled, Miss Munson," he said, "nothing unpleasant to yourself can occur."

"I thank you," she replied, speaking like one in a dream. "Will you call my brother? Where is he? We must leave here to-day, and take the next steamer to America."

But Mortimer was nowhere to be found; the countess had also mysteriously disappeared. In the young man's room, which was in frightful disorder, was a letter for his mother, that renewed Mrs. Munson's frightful spasms.

Let us go back a couple of hours, and learn something of Master Mortimer.

Just as he was thinking of following his mother to find out who her mysterious visitor could be, he noticed that the countess had disappeared. He rose in haste, and as he did so, he saw his betrothed in the adjoining room beckoning to him.

"Come to my apartment, quick," she said.

He followed her in fear, and when there she exclaimed,

"You are to lose me! I know all; your mother's guest comes from my aunt, the princess—she has heard of you—she will take me from uncle and put me in a convent."

She wept convulsively, and did high tragedy equal to Rachel.

"Fly with me," he cried, "there is time!"

"Alas!" she moaned, "my uncle has left me penniless."

"But I have enough; my mother will follow us."

He had in his pocket the check for thirty thousand francs received from his father. The countess resisted for a time, but there seemed no other way, and she consented.

"My passport is *void*," she said, "I have kept it so of late, for I had everything to dread from my uncle's violence; it is for Thillon too

and a male servant—go as that, till we reach Brussels, then get a passport from your minister."

It required only a few moments to cash the check. The countess and her dragon met him at the station with a load of trunks, wonderful to behold considering the time they had had, and away they flew toward Brussels.

Mortimer had left a note for his mother, telling her what had happened, really believing that she would be satisfied. But alas! Hamlyn knew about the countess too!

Mrs. Munson was put to bed under the influence of a strong narcotic; and Estelle and Hamlyn settled everything. He took a list of their debts—paid them—learned the route the fugitives had taken, and before morning the three were on their way to Brussels.

That was a happy journey to Mortimer! Never had the countess been so kind; the dragon sat near, but did not intrude upon their whispered conversation, and away they sped toward what he deemed lasting bliss.

They reached Brussels. When the countess had taken a few hours' rest, Mortimer was admitted to her presence.

"We will wait here," she said, "for your dear mother, it would not be proper to go on to Paris. You must go to your minister in case you should need a passport before they come."

"But, for the love of heaven, don't take that money in your purse," said Thillon.

"Dear Thillon is so careful," laughed the countess; and he gave the thirty thousand francs to the respected old lady.

Late that night he left the countess, went to bed, and dreamed gloriously. As early the next morning as was proper he descended to the ladies' rooms.

"They are gone," said the servant.

"Out already?" he said, in surprise.

"Gone, sir, gone, with their trunks."

"Yes, and here is the bill," said the landlord, coming up before he could speak; "you must

settle it before you can go. They said you would pay it, and you shall!"

"Gone!" repeated Mortimer. He rushed into the rooms—not a trace—not a vestige left. Yes, on the table a note directed to himself, and which he opened in mad haste.

"My uncle has discovered my retreat—farewell, dear sir."

"Who did they go with?" he gasped.

"A general something——"

"De Mirecourt?"

"That's the name. And oh! *mon dieu*," said the servant, "I saw them after they got into the carriage—how they laughed about you!"

She had gone indeed, and the thirty thousand francs with her, to help carry on in other places her swindling practices, and with the successful adventures journeyed the tyrannical uncle and the handsome marquis.

"And the bill?" said the landlord. "I believe you are all a set of swindlers! Pay or go to prison!"

Mortimer could not pay, so he did go to prison; and there it was that Hamlyn found him when he reached Brussels with his unhappy charges.

The family meeting is beyond the power of description.

A week after, they were on their way to America; and when they reached their native land, Mrs. Munson found her husband a comparatively poor man.

Human nature is tough, and none of them died. There were vague rumors, more sneers, but nobody ever knew the truth.

The business fell into the hands of Ralph Hamlyn. Mortimer became his clerk, and, only a year after, Ralph married Estelle. Mrs. Munson's sufferings must have been acute, but she kept them to herself, and, with renewed prosperity, her spirits revived; but, though still fond of show and self-praise, she was never heard to talk much of her European trip, or boast of her acquaintance with titled people.

TOO LATE.

BY CATHARINE F. WILLIAMS.

I CANNOT say I was exactly pleased when the rumor first reached me that my brother Frederic was attentive to Helen North. In the first place, I thought we were happy enough as we were; I could not see that the house wanted another mistress, or we another companion; and, in the second, she was not at all the girl I should have chosen for him. I knew no harm of her; she was a nice, pretty little thing enough, but the last person I should have thought likely to attract or interest him.

I was many years older than my brother; our parents were long dead, and I had filled toward him almost a mother's place. We lived about a mile from the little country town in which his "store" was situated, on a large farm, amply stocked and in admirable order. We were well-to-do in the world, and even considered rich in that simple neighborhood. Our house was better furnished than most of those about us; we had pictures, plenty of books, and a piano; also, we used silver forks, and I had a handsome diamond ring. Frederic was a man of leisure; his attendance at the store was merely nominal, as the excellent head clerk and his two subordinates were fully equal to the work of the establishment. Mr. Vincent's part of the labor constituted mostly in sitting two or three hours a day under the awning in summer, or near the stove in winter, reading such books and papers as suited him, or chatting with neighbors who dropped in about the news of the day. At home he worked a little in the garden, sawed wood for his health's sake; read to me, or listened to my music. More rarely he went out with gun or fishing-tackle for a day's sport. Once I had cherished high hopes of Frederic. His natural gifts were fine, and his youth gave promise of a useful and honored life. But a great disappointment early crushed his ambition: a beautiful, unscrupulous woman played with his heart to gratify her vanity, and cast him aside for a richer suitor. Most men would have risen superior to such a grief, but Frederic's character was wanting in strength and resolution. He made no complaint or comment, even to me, when the truth was forced upon him; but, from that hour, his spirit seemed to have lost all elasticity and joyousness. He gave up all

care for his profession, became a country merchant, and settled down into a quiet, thoughtful, indolent man. There must have been a radical defect in him, I knew, or Adele Bonnevill's heartlessness could never have wrought such a change; but I did not love her any better for that. I grew used, in time, to the loss of all my brilliant hopes of him, and looked forward to our spending together a tranquil, yet not joyless, old-maid and bachelor existence. Upon this anticipation the news of his attachment broke, as I have said, unpleasantly. I saw, at once, a dozen excellent reasons why we were better off as we were, and felt almost vexed with Frederic for taking a step so entirely unnecessary and out-of-the-way. However, I am not quite destitute either of good feeling or common sense, so that after the first surprise was over, I began to see that it was not so very out-of-the-way; for he was but twenty-nine, after all, and if it would contribute to his happiness it was not unnecessary. After a time, I actually found myself taking considerable pleasure in the thought of it, and dropping little jesting hints to Frederic when he came home late of an evening. He commonly received them without much demonstration; but, one night, a beautiful moonlight night in September, I saw, as I opened the door, that he had news for me. I waited a few minutes and then opened the conference.

"Something has happened?" I asked.

"Yes, dear," he said, putting his arm around me, and kissing my forehead, kindly, "something *has* happened. My fate is decided, Margaret."

How short a distance we can see ahead! He had thought it decided when Adele rejected him; he was sure now that, as regarded the heart, all was settled, his life's work done. We were silent awhile; thoughts of the past made me serious, and little disposed for conversation, and he probably felt as I did.

"You don't congratulate me," he said, at length, with a smile. "Do you disapprove. Margaret?"

"Oh! no," I said, eagerly. "I am sorry, indeed, if my silence has led you to think so. Every one tells me she is a sweet girl, and I love her already for your sake. But this

evening brought back so forcibly another time, seven years ago. Oh! how we were deceived in that woman!"

A moment's agitation crossed his face. "We have done with her," he said, quietly.

"You are sure, Fred; entirely sure? You so care for Helen that no remembrance of Adele will ever come to make the love you lost seem fairer and dearer than what you possess?"

"I think so, Margaret," he answered, speaking slowly; "I truly believe it. It were a sin otherwise to take Helen to my heart. The love I feel for her is unlike what I once felt; different as the cheerful fire, which men light on their hearths and sit around, is from the fierce conflagration bearing destruction in its path. She is good, Margaret, far better than I deserve. God grant I may make her happy."

"Amen!" I said. "And as your welfare is a little to be thought of, too, I say also, may she make *you* happy," and after that we sat up till one o'clock talking over the matter.

There was no great delay about the wedding. Helen was an orphan, and the relatives with whom she lived made no useless ceremony in parting with her. Three months from the night just mentioned they were married, in presence of the "assembled wealth and fashion" of the place, and, after the usual journey, returned home to me. I say to *me*, for I was still there, though feeling myself somewhat of a stranger and sojourner. When the marriage was first contemplated, I wished to take what was mine and retire to some small dwelling of my own, but Frederic and Helen strenuously opposed the plan. I was called strange, absurd, and finally unkind. What could induce me to such a step? Thus accused and urged I gave my reasons.

"I have been mistress here a long time, Nelly," I said; "and you might feel delicate about taking your rightful place if I remained; perhaps I might even be hurt at finding myself superseded. We have a real affection for each other now, or it seems so; but——"

"But you think we had not better put it to the test," she answered, laughing.

"Not quite that; but you know it is always said that it is not well for people to live together in the way you propose. It would be better for us to begin with having separate establishments than by-and-by to regret that we had not done so. If the experiment of living together failed, it would be awkward and painful to make a change. We had better not run the risk."

Against the decision Nelly protested eagerly, and after awhile I gave up my better judgment

to please her. It was flattering, certainly, that such desire for my society was manifested. One precaution I took: knowing that the dislikes and disagreements of women often hinge on little trifles of domestic management, I withdrew from the housekeeper's realm, insisted on paying a certain sum for my board, and having no jurisdiction out of my own room. Moreover I decided with myself that, on the first symptoms of any coolness, anything that pointed toward future discord, I would go; not wait for open trouble, but just quietly withdraw, with some good excuse, to a home of my own.

It was almost a pity that so many wise planings and cogitations were expended for nought. When we had been together six months I felt myself a thorough fixture, and thought no more of taking myself off than the barns or the fences would have done. I found life pleasanter than it had been since my first youth, for I had a constant companion, cheerful, gentle, and affectionate. We made cake together of mornings: she rubbing the butter and sugar; I beating the eggs. We sewed together in the afternoon, or read aloud, or took long, pleasant walks; and we interlarded these pursuits with talks on every imaginable subject: serious, pathetic, gay, profound. I took care to leave her plenty of time with Frederic. I did not wish her to feel me an interruption to the enjoyment of his society, and I don't think she ever did. All the little misgivings I had at first lest he did not love her well enough soon passed away. She was the light, the crown of his life, and I doubted not that the ghost of his dead attachment was finally laid.

I have said nothing, so far, of their appearance. Frederic was tall, and slight, with a pale face, and dark, clear eyes. His manners were singularly reserved, yet gentle; he said little in society, but was a charming companion in his own home. He had read a great deal, and all his tastes were studious and intellectual. The opposite of all this was Nelly. She did not care for reading, beyond an occasional poem or story, though she held Frederic's attainments in profoundest reverence. She was an exquisite little housekeeper, dressed herself to perfection, and had a temper bright and sweet as May sunshine. She was very pretty, too: fair, rose-checked, blue-eyed, short, plump; if she had a personal defect it might be in her shape: she was perhaps a trifle "dumpy." But this was rather a merit in my eyes, for I was very thin myself, and being frequently told of it, as all such people are, had come to regard lack of flesh as the one crying sin against beauty.

It was about two years after their marriage that Adele Bonnevard—or Adele Fisher, as she was now, having taken that euphonious name at the same time with the old gentleman who bore it—came to live in our neighborhood. What brought them there I never could divine, unless it was our evil star, for there was no special attraction of scenery or society to account for it. However it was, they came, bought the handsomest place in the village, and altered, added, repaired, and refurbished it to an extent that made all Newton open its eyes with wonder. Mrs. Fisher was soon the great lady of the place, her dress the model of style, her entertainments the most elegant, her manners the most admired. Every one knows how it is when a rich, gay, beautiful woman comes into a quiet little country town. Her husband, of an age amply sufficient to have made him her grandfather, seemed to allow her perfect liberty, and to be very proud of her beauty and talents. She had both, and in no small degree. I expected to find her altered in the years since we had met; but, if there were a change, it was for the better, and added only to the dignity and grace which were her characteristics.

We had some consultation at home when the Fishers first came as to whether we should call or not. I considered Adele a heartless and wicked woman, for I have not the habit of regarding unprincipled coquetry as the delightful weakness some consider it; I gave my vote, therefore, for a system of non-intercourse. Frederic was indifferent, but Nelly, urged perhaps by a fatal curiosity to behold this early idol of her husband's heart, was much in favor of making the acquaintance. Calls were exchanged, then invitations, and by degrees Mrs. Fisher became our very frequent visitor. I liked to see her, spite of my knowledge of her previous history; she had a wonderful power of charming, when she chose. Nelly was all enthusiasm for her great beauty and rare accomplishments. I watched Frederic narrowly when they first met; he turned, I thought, a shade paler, but greeted her with his usual courteous, yet distant manner. It was not till we had known her some months, and she had become almost an intimate of the family, that his coldness thawed a little, and he began to treat her with something like friendliness. It was plain that the change gratified her, that she had felt piqued by his reserve. Well, that was natural enough, I thought; their early relation was a thing of the past and forgotten; a woman of her stamp, accustomed always to

receive homage from the other sex, must have been mortified by his stiff demeanor. It must have seemed to her like an accusation on account of matters which she had ceased to consider of any import; no wonder she was glad to overcome such a foolish resentment. So I reasoned like an admirable judge of human nature as I was.

I had never seen Frederic in his best days more animated or brilliant than he now became under the potent charm of Adele's presence. The old fire flashed from his eyes, his conversation became again that mingling of wit, and playfulness, and feeling, which I used to think so unapproachable. If it had not been for Nelly's little form at hand, I could have fancied that the last eight or nine years were a dream. I sat and listened delightedly to their words; Adele knew so well how to draw him out, their minds were so congenial. It seemed they, too, had not so entirely forgotten the past; for by-and-by it was, "Do you remember?" and "I am sure you recollect," in reference to some old scene or association. I smiled to myself occasionally, amused to think of the contrast between then and now; the two lovers so little changed in mind or person, but so thoroughly altered at heart; Frederic reposing on the pure, sincere affection of our Nelly; Adele given up to the world and its vanities.

Perhaps these evening conversations took, sometimes, too much the form of a dialogue; but if ever I began to think so, Adele, with admirable tact, dispelled the feeling. She would come to where Nelly sat, interest herself in the child's work, tell her of pretty things she had seen, and offer her patterns. Sometimes she played for us; occasionally she sang. I don't know much of music, but I have heard those who did say she was a very accomplished performer. I know that when she played, the old piano became by turns warlike and fierce, tender and pathetic; its tones ran now liquid as some little brook; then they changed to sadness, wailing, entreaty. I could hear all those things while her white hands were flying over the keys. And when she sang, the rich velvety sound filled our little parlor like the perfume from a vase of flowers. You may guess such music was a treat to us, for I played only dancing tunes—Money Musk, Paddy Carey, Haste to the Wedding, and the like—while Nelly's songs were all of the simplest kind. I remember thinking, once or twice, that Nelly never appeared to so poor advantage as when Adele was by.

After awhile my little sister ceased to say as much in praise of Mrs. Fisher, was slower to

return her visits, and not, I fancied, so very glad to see her at our own house. It puzzled me somewhat, but one day I thought I had got a clue. We were sitting together sewing; Adele had spent the previous evening with us, and Frederic and she had been reviving their old love of German, and recalling numerous passages from Schiller, Goethe, Uhland, and a host of other writers. It was a feast they seemed to enjoy very much, but Nelly and I, entirely ignorant of those authors, hardly shared their delight. On this particular morning the young wife was very thoughtful; she sewed in silence for full half an hour.

"Margaret," said she, at last, "do you suppose I could learn German? Is it very hard?"

"Yes, pretty hard, I believe, dear, though I dare say you might learn if you really set about it. But why should you trouble yourself with such a study? Better leave it to Mrs. Fisher, who seems to know it thoroughly, and shows a familiar acquaintance with many books, which, judging by what I have heard of them, it would be much more to her credit to be ignorant of." Nelly made no reply. I thought, "Can she possibly be jealous of Adele? Foolish little thing!" I tried judiciously to ascertain this point, but Nelly was too deep for me. She betrayed nothing, and I believed there was nothing to betray. Idiot! as if she were likely to tell me "that her heart bled," just as frankly as she might say she had cut her finger!

I have forgotten to mention one thing about her; the very intense and absorbing affection she bore her husband. I have seen women who excelled my poor little sister in many things, but never one that equaled her in the power of loving. Perhaps it might be that she had no near relatives to divert or dilute her regard; I can't say. But she loved Frederic so much that he seemed truly a part of her being; his comfort, his wishes, were always uppermost in her thoughts. The feeling showed itself, I must admit, in a variety of ways that a true heroine would never dream of; in preparing dishes which he liked, keeping his clothes in the best possible order, and even—horrible to relate!—ironing his shirts and collars! She always did it, from a fancy that she made them look nicer than any one else could do. He had her whole heart; I could as soon have imagined Nelly dead at once as living apart from him.

The idea of the German lessons was not abandoned; she asked Frederic to teach her; a proposal which he received with undisguised astonishment.

"Why, kitton," said he, "what nonsense!

What has put such a notion in your little head?"

"I am so ignorant of the things you care for," she answered. "I should be glad to learn something of them."

"If that is all," he said, carelessly, "there is enough for you in English; try Milton, Tennyson, Shakspeare; almost any one, in fact. You will find it much less troublesome," and he went on reading his newspaper. Nelly urged the matter no farther, but I saw she was hurt, and felt very sorry for her. I wondered at Frederic's manner; it was not like him; not like what he had been a month ago, at least. I hinted as much to him when we were alone a few minutes afterward. To my surprise he took the remonstrance in very bad part.

"It is very unpleasant, Margaret," he said, "to have every action watched, and to be called to account for every word I speak."

"Don't you exaggerate a little?" I asked.

"No," he answered, pettishly, "I am made to feel every day and every hour that people's eyes are upon me. As for Nelly, it is a very foolish whim; the absurdity of wanting to learn German when she knows nothing at all of our own literature!"

"It was not very kind of you to tell her so, however," I said.

"I can't help it. She ought to be contented with what I can give her. She ought not to expect to monopolize every movement of my mind, as well as every throb of my heart!"

"You are very unjust, Frederic."

"Just look at it candidly, Margaret, and you will see how it is. She cannot bear that I should have a little intelligent conversation now and then, and hence this scheme to take up my time and draw me away from Adele. The preposterousness—the utter preposterousness—of setting herself up as a rival to Adele!"

"I should be sorry indeed if she thought of such a thing," I said. "I should hope she had a truer sense of her own value than to institute any comparison."

"One would suppose so," he answered, taking my remark in a very different sense from what I intended. "But it seems she has not," he continued, after a moment's pause. "She is jealous of Adele—Adele is made to feel it when she comes here—the pleasure of her visits is destroyed."

"Let her stay away then," I said, shortly. "But how do you know that such are Mrs. Fisher's feelings?" No answer. "She has told you so?" Not a word. "Oh! Frederic, Frederic," I cried, "take care what you do.

There is something wrong here. You are allowing an unprincipled woman too much influence over you."

"Margaret," he said, with more anger than I had ever seen him manifest, "remember you are in *my* house, and speaking of *my* friend. No one shall be allowed to mention her name otherwise than with respect. I will leave you now, and trust that by to-morrow you will have recovered your temper and your sense of propriety." He went to his own room, leaving me completely mystified. What had I said to cause such a burst of passion? What had come over Frederic? It couldn't be intoxication, for he never indulged in wine; nor sudden insanity; yet I knew not what else could account for his behavior. Perhaps Nelly *was* jealous; perhaps she had vexed him with complaints and reproaches; but that was no excuse. I turned the matter over and over in my own mind, and gained neither light nor comfort in doing so.

A few days went by, and Mrs. Fisher came to make us a parting call. She was going to New York to spend some weeks with a friend. I was so grateful to her for this timely absence, that I behaved with unusual cordiality, and even kissed her for good-by. After she went, things seemed to fall into much the old train; though Frederic still treated me with cool politeness. I began to fancy that he only resented my remarks as an interference in his private affairs, and mentally resolved to let the difficulties of my married friends alone in future.

One evening, he did not come home from the store as usual; a boy brought us a note, saying that sudden business called him away, and that he would return in a few days. We waited anxiously for farther news: but none came. You can guess what we heard next; Adele had disappeared from the residence of her friends. A little time of horrible, heart-sick suspense, and then the whole black truth came out. They had gone to France together.

Oh! but that was a blow! I never suspected it, never dreamed of it. I thought just as I said, that he was allowing her too much influence over him, and I dreaded lest Nelly were uneasy about it. But I thank heaven that the suspicion of such a cruel, treacherous crime never once entered my mind.

I can hardly describe to you how Nelly bore it. She was quiet, she made no outcry or lamentation; it was never her habit to parade her feelings. After a day or two, she went on with every household care as usual; but sometimes she let fall her sewing for a moment, and clasped her hands with such a look of anguish!

Then she covered her face; I think she was praying.

In the first surprise and horror, when we spoke more freely than afterward, I learned that she had never reproached him, never made the least allusion to his interest in Adele. She had felt, indeed, a vague unhappiness, but that was all, and she was beginning, like me, to be at ease again when the shock came.

We stayed together, for each loved the other the best of any in the world now that he was gone. Our way of life was not much altered outwardly; we worked, and sewed, and walked as before; but the pleasant talks were over. Neither of us had spirits for much conversation.

One Sunday evening we went out in the orchard, and sat upon a grassy slope beneath the trees. There was a brook, a mere thread, running at the foot of the hill, and, in the stillness, its little tinkle was distinctly heard; the beds of peppermint that grew on the other side filled the air with their homely, yet pleasant fragrance. The sun was low, and all the heavens in a glory of rose and golden clouds. Nelly had been sitting quietly, apparently unmindful of the beauty of the evening; but presently she lifted her eyes to the sky above, and said, "It is very bright, Margaret; but how dark the whole world looks to me!"

"You must not feel in that way," I said, vehemently. "Oh! Nelly, it will never do! You must not let the sins of other people shadow all your life. You are innocent; there must be ways in which you can be happy. Throw off all thought of that false, cruel pain; try to take an interest in another sort of life than the one you have lost. You are young, you are capable of forming many new ties. Only cast behind you all thoughts of the past, and you may yet be happy."

She made no objection to my views; she only looked at me with such a sad and gentle smile. "Margaret," she said, at length, "do you think he will ever come back?"

"I don't know," I answered, hastily. "I hope not. I hope he will never return to see the misery he has caused."

"Don't say so," she pleaded. "I think of it every moment when I am awake. If I see any one coming toward the house, or hear a footstep at the door, I start, fancying that he has come. Oh! he must, he will, I am sure; the feeling for her cannot last always; there *will* be a time when he will remember me, and how dearly I loved him!"

"Perhaps so; but, Nelly, you never would

receive him? You would never even speak to a man who has used you so?"

"Dear Margaret," she said, tearfully, "how can you be so harsh? Haven't you a little love left for him when he used to be so dear to you? Oh! if he only came, how gladly I would receive him; then, indeed, I might forget the past as you wish me to. Don't be angry—he is my husband, you know—and—and—I don't know how to tell you, Margaret—but he will be my baby's father!"

Here was news indeed. I had congratulated myself hitherto, so far as one may use the word with reference to so sad a business, that there were no children to learn hereafter the story of their father's sin and their mother's suffering. Poor little Nelly had told no one. She could not bear to speak of it to Frederic while he seemed so occupied with Adele. She had waited in hope that the old confidence and affection would be restored. After his departure she had kept the secret, fearing to add to my troubles by the knowledge of it. I do not say that it affected me thus; I very soon perceived how fortunate a circumstance it was. It gave Nelly something to think about, something to do; it furnished her an interest in life, now that her first and greatest interest was withdrawn. Yet she did not tremble as I had hoped to see her; she worked diligently at the little frocks and skirts, but she seldom smiled or indulged in fond anticipation of the time when the baby would be with us. Once or twice she spoke of things she would like to have me do, in case she should not live. I could not bear to hear her talk in such a way.

"Is anything the matter?" I inquired, anxiously. "Do, Nelly, have Dr. Burroughs. Don't neglect any precaution you can possibly take."

"I have no ailment," she answered. "I only feel so weary and discouraged. I'm afraid I shall not live to see him, Margaret, unless he comes very soon."

I tried to cheer her, but her words made me uneasy. I knew it was the commonest thing in the world for people in such circumstances to presage a fatal result, and that she was not a whit more likely to die because she expected to; yet her pale cheek, her gentle, quiet manner distressed me almost beyond endurance. I called in Dr. Burroughs, but he found no bad symptoms, and when I spoke of her presentiment it only amused him. "That is nothing," he said. "She will live to laugh at it herself."

So time went on, and at last the day came—the fatal day for my poor Nelly. After hours

of terrible suffering she gave birth to a dead infant, and a little after breathed her last. I could not believe it. She lay there so peaceful and smiling that I thought every moment she must open her eyes and speak to me; but no! she was gone. And though the doctor told me the cause of her death, and maintained that it was purely physical, and liable to have happened under any circumstances, in my heart I accused Frederic and Adele as her murderers.

The funeral took place the third day after her death. Every one came from miles around to pay the last tribute of regard, for she had been a favorite always. She was lovelier in death than life, if that were possible, as she lay there with the little baby in her arms. When, with many tears, we had looked our last, the coffin was borne to its final resting-place. None of our family was buried in the village churchyard: all were laid in a little enclosure on our own land. It was a pretty spot, upon a gently sloping hill. There were some large elm trees in it, and a few pines, dark and solemn. The little brook I told you of before made a pleasant murmur in the air. Whether it were the associations of the place, I know not, but it had always seemed to me that nowhere did the wind rustle so peacefully among the leaves as here; no sunshine was so bright and soft as that which fell across the graves. Nelly and I had spent many an hour here, busy with our sewing, and talking of such things as the scene around suggested to a thoughtful mind. Thither we now bore her. As the clods fell on her coffin, I heard all around me the sound of weeping. I was not alone in my grief. But the one who should have mourned most deeply, where was he? Did no pang of remorse break upon his guilty pleasures as the faithful heart that loved him so was laid in its last, long home?

At last all was over, and there was nothing for me to do but to go back to the deserted house and begin my lonely life. How lonely it was nobody can tell who has not gone through a like experience, missing every hour and everywhere a dear, familiar face. And mingled with my grief was the hard, bitter resentment against those who had darkened my Nelly's life with such a sorrow. All the consolation I found was in paying such marks of regard to her memory as affection could suggest. I had her portrait painted from a daguerreotype, and the artist, a skillful one, produced an admirable likeness. I placed a monument in the burying-ground, telling her name and age. I had a lock of her fair hair framed in a pin and wore it always. But how

cold and empty was all the comfort I gained from these things! If the baby had but lived! That would have been a dear, perpetual remembrancer of her.

In looking through her drawers one day, preparatory to making some disposition of her clothing, as she had wished me to do in case she did not live, I came upon a letter addressed to me, and enclosing one for Frederic. It was written the week before she died, and spoke of her death as she had never done to me in person, knowing how it troubled me. She expressed her resignation, her unfaltering hope of another and a better life. She would have been glad, for her baby's sake, to remain on earth, but she felt it was not to be, and she confided the little one to my care, knowing that I would be a tender mother to it. The last words were of Frederic, begging me to forgive him, conjuring me to receive him kindly, if ever he should return. And she believed he would; she had too much faith in the mercy of God to believe it possible that he should not, some day, forsake the paths of sin and come back to his home and its duties.

I suppose it was very wrong, but when I read this letter, and remembered all the dear child had suffered, in finding herself deceived and deserted, I was farther than ever from forgiving the cause of it.

A year passed by in solitude and sadness. One day, late in October, I was sitting by the window sewing, as was my wont, when I heard a ring at the front door. I waited a moment for Annie to answer the summons; then thought I might as well go myself. I opened the door, expecting to see some friend or neighbor, and Frederic stood before me!

I gazed at him a minute in a sort of stony surprise; then the habitual bitterness arose in my mind,

"So you have come at last!" I exclaimed, without moving, or making room for him to enter, and fixing my eyes upon him with reproachful sternness.

"Yes, I have come," he said. "It is late, I know. But where is Nelly? I cannot rest till I have seen her."

"Nelly!" At that name a vision rose before me of her patient life, her untimely death, and a hot, vindictive feeling filled my heart. "You want to see her?" I cried; "you have the courage to ask it of me after all you have done? Well, it is a pity you should be refused—come," and I passed swiftly from the house: he following. Through the orchard I led him, up the little slope to the burial-place;

I flung open wide the gate, and, passing among the graves, stood by Nelly's tomb.

"There she is!" I said. "There, where your wickedness brought her! Say what you like, she cannot hear you now."

Was I cruel? Perhaps so—my thoughts were all of her. I did not stop to consider his feelings. But my heart softened to him when I beheld his terrible surprise, his overmastering sorrow. For he had never heard of her death, and when I bade him come, supposed he was to meet the living Nelly and plead his cause with her. Well I knew how she would have met him! But instead of the warm embrace, the ready pardon, he found only a green mound, through whose sods no voice of love or forgiveness could ever pierce.

I watched him awhile in the frantic outburst of his grief, and then returned to the house, leaving him alone with the dead. I sat down again by the window, mechanically taking up my work while I pondered what should be done. Gradually the hard, resentful feeling passed from my mind; I recalled Nelly's entreaty, and was willing, for her sake, to pardon the destroyer of her happiness. I went up stairs and took the letters from the bureau-drawer; the day she had foreseen was come at last! He had returned; and, as I gave him her dying words, I endeavored to fulfill her prayers.

It was long ere Frederic was composed enough to give me the history of the past two years; then I learned that old story, old as our race, of temptation and crime, of disappointment and disgust. Very soon he had wearied of Adele, and longed for the pure love of his wife; yet he had remained, bound by a sentiment of pity for her, for whom he had destroyed the possibility of any honorable or happy future. Adele, without principle of any sort, exacting and fickle in her attachments, grew speedily weary of him; and her great beauty rendering her still attractive in the eyes of lawless love, she had captivated a man of rank and fortune, for whom she forsook him. Thus freed, his first thought was to fly to the home and the wife of whom he had heard no tidings since he abandoned them. He came in penitence, hoping much from Nelly's loving nature, yet feeling that he deserved the worst. Where he found her you already know.

What tears he shed over her letter, and my recital of her sorrow and her death! One mark of that love, shown a little earlier, would have brought such happiness to her poor heart! But it came, alas! *too late*.

Too late, I mean for this world. Frederic lived but a few years after his return, but those

years were marked by the exercise of virtues , dared to hope that he had met her in that world
to which he had once been a stranger. And ; where the errors and the sufferings of this pre-
when I laid him in the grave by Nelly's side, I ; sent life are remembered no more forever.

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TRAVELERS AND TRAVELING.

BY MARY A. DENISON.

THINK for a moment of the masses moving in every direction. From homes of wealth and of poverty they come—from the emigrant's little cabin of mud by the wayside, and the palace of the titled noble—on they throng, men, women, and children—sick and well—joyful and sorrowful. Some are in the first flush of wedded happiness, on their bridal tour—some are leaving the home of youth and childhood, where they have been sheltered and fondled, to seek a scanty living in a heartless world. Some go at the call of husbands to the lands of the golden mountains—some to while away a leisure that is wearisome, to fill a void no earthly pleasure can satisfy. What endless packing of trunks and bags is perpetually in progress from the rising of the sun till its going down! Did you ever think of it, reader? How all the avenues of commerce are crowded with the constant coming and going of articles needed for transportation. Fourteen trunks carried off from the steps of our next door neighbor, who is going to show her two or three dozen new "loves" of dresses at Saratoga. "That place where really noblemen go sometimes, dear!" Truly man (and woman too) is a living locomotive, under full pressure, flying, flashing from town to town, from country to country, never at rest, puffing and blowing, and steaming it through the world.

Those who have pockets full of money, and can afford to wait for detention of boat or car, ought to enjoy all the delights of traveling. They can stop when they please, put up at the most expensive hotels, keep a body-guard of waiters about them, all the time, by a liberal supply of the cash—be stared at, talked about, admired, and envied to their hearts' content. To such, there is scarcely a higher pleasure than to make a sensation. They love to hear the sly side communication, "Guess he's rich." They love to sit in state, on the right hand of the master of ceremonies—to have the wants of their wives and daughters attended to first, and themselves listened to as "Sir Oracles." So, their little hearts are contented. Then they smack their lips, and talk smoothly of the little things, whose cognizance has chanced to pass through the avenue of their very limited brains.

Others, languid and faint, to whom a straw is a burden, endure with indescribable anguish the discomforts of travel. How often have we seen some pale face, touching in its uncomplaining sorrow, leaning wearily upon the seat of car or steamboat! When the bosom is burdened with sighs, and brain and heart are throbbing with pain, the loud laugh of the thoughtless, the chit-chat of the happy, the bounding steps of the little child—how strange they seem! One thought only fills the mind—one star shines through the deep gloom—it is the thought and the star of home! They are going home! The dear, old mother is there. At her touch the fires of the brain will sink to slumber; the heart will throb less heavily. The pillow and the couch are waiting there—the voice of love—the prayer of faith. So long the earth-weary for heaven!

Sometimes there is a fugitive from justice on board, who sits in sullen silence, with clenched hands and teeth, and hat drawn over his brows. He dares not look at a single face, for he feels that on his own is branded an indelible mark.

As the train nears the village, or the town, he cowers in deadly fear, for he knows the very lightnings have proclaimed his guilt, and the officers of outraged justice are on his track. Poor, guilty wretch! was the paltry gain worth all this shame and anguish?

The selfish traveler makes his mark. The windows shall be shut and opened, as his sovereign will dictates; though the winds, soothing to him, strike the chill of death through a tenderer frame, he never disturbs his precious self. He is an unabated nuisance—turn him out.

It is passing strange, that many travelers, especially mothers with little children, will not take the precaution to provide themselves with water for the journey; a flask and dipper, or tumbler, would not take up an inconvenient amount of room, and would save much annoyance. Once, in traveling, we were seated near a little family, consisting of a mother and two children—one of whom was quite ill—and an aged grandparent. For the first part of the journey all went well, water could be obtained, at the depots, to cool the parched lips of the

little stranger. But night came on—a stormy night of wind and tempest, and the child grew very sick and impatient; we seem to hear her moaning little voice, faint, weak, and imploring; we see those large, languid blue eyes floating in tears.

“Drink, mamma!—drink, drink, mamma!” resounded at constant intervals, accompanied sometimes with bitter cries.

We wondered that we had not thought of obtaining water. The mother, worn out with watching and fatigue, burst into tears and sobbed piteously, while the little voice kept up its

pleading, monotonous cry, “Drink, mamma, drink!”

The fever burned her lips; her cheeks blazed; her breath was like fire—yet no water could be had for love or money, along the route of the rushing train. Think of it, the child was dying of thirst—absolutely perishing for water—and the thoughtless mother had no resort but tears. Could they but quench the poor child's thirst, we could have wept till morning. Alas! when morning came, the little sufferer had put on wings. She died in the cars, and—here we will leave the subject. It may induce some to think.

UNDER THE MAPLE TREE.

BY ANNIE BREWSTER.

Yes, under this broad maple shadow has been my favorite seat for many, many years. I had this bench made here when I first came as a bride, here I used to come with my babies, and here I now sit as a matron, with the rich purple shadows of my autumn glowing up warmly and lovingly around me.

There lies our little town at the foot of the hill, some houses slowly creeping around the river side. When I first came here, this place of ours seemed likely to be the centre of the village, and now it is quite in the outskirts, the town following its natural bent toward the water side. How the place has grown! Five times at least its original size a quarter of a century ago.

I have often wished I could write like Miss Mitford; for this Western village of ours had in it so many original characters, and our mode of life, both in our occupations and pleasures, was so peculiar, so totally different from the habits and customs of any Eastern or Southern town, that a sparkling, vivid mind, possessing creative faculty, would have seized on these peculiarities, and made life-like sketches as interesting to the American reader, as were those of "Our Village" to the English.

Just run over the material collected here, at that time. Soldiers from the elder Napoleon group; philosophers, whose dreamy speculations had agitated Europe; visionary professional men; poetical *savans* whose names will go down as remarkable in the history of science, all banded together, pursuing the great thought of their day education—the perfection of coming humanity by material, mortal means.

Then the wives, and daughters, and sisters, were like the men, clever, cultured, but more striking from their breaking loose from social conventionalities than were the men, because women are naturally conventional, you know.

Old Herbert says that a servant who sweeps a room as for God's pleasure,

"Makes that and the action fine."

You are saying the whole verse to yourself, I see by the movement of your mouth. How those lovely, quaint old things well up in the memory and overflow the lips!

"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine."

And so it was with us. To be sure not from the same pious motives the old churchman meant, but from a pure motive nevertheless. So filled were we with the faith of being able to relieve life, both domestic and social, from what may be called Adam's bequeathment of glorious curses, that no occupation seemed laborious or vulgar.

We held ourselves under strict discipline of temper and morals, in order to produce strong impressions for good on the infant minds of our children, born and unborn. We would not permit life's duties to be disagreeable, therefore our work, much of which was laborious, and had to be performed by our own hands—as domestic help was a luxury almost unknown in this then frontier village—was done with a *gout* and enjoyment not often thrown into such occupations.

For some years it was a real golden age; and though I cannot say I have the same firm faith in mere human means and education alone, that I once had in my "defiant season," as some one has cleverly called youth, yet I must say, the children born and bred under those influences I speak of, have grown up, in many respects, quite superior to the ordinary run of children.

But I did not bring you out here under the maple shade, to spend the whole of this glorious sunset in talking on my favorite theme, our old life in Concord—as we fancifully, and yet innocently called our town—it was to tell you something about Mrs. Turner, with whom you say you were so charmed when you met her in Switzerland, last year, and which I did not care to talk of before the girls this morning.

"So clever, so fascinating, so beautiful," you said. Yes, she is all that, but the finale of your praise sounded curiously to me, who knew all her glorious past. "So much the lady!" were your words, I think, a woman who bears so plainly in her presence, that she was fashioned by nature as a rare and precious vessel, never to be put to vulgar uses. It is so beautiful to see one perfect woman nobly planned, "not marred and disjointed by the wrenching and tossing of trouble." I was sure I remembered your very words. Now let me tell you about Edith Turner

I think it is full twelve years ago—yes! it was

when my Oscar was a babe, and he is twelve this sweet autumn—

Look at those beautiful trees sweeping up that opposite hill-side, with the setting sun beaming gloriously over them, and that sky, and those clouds! Oh! my friend, is it not all as beautiful as anything we saw in Europe? You assent! when I know you do not agree with me. You arch hypocrite! You only say "yes" to get me back to my starting point.

Very well then! It was twelve years ago this coming December, when, one cold night, St. John came to me with a most perplexed countenance.

"My dear," he said, "my old friend, Fowler Foulke, has just arrived at Concord, with all his family. You remember—from Manchester—whose father, a dear old friend of grandfather, made such a fine fortune in trade, which the son has known how to spend so readily. He wrote to me a year or so ago about buying property out here, and I purchased the large Saxon Farm for him. Surely you have not forgotten. He says he has come out to farm it on my recommendation. I am certain I do not remember advising him to do anything of the kind. I know I counseled the buying of the place, and very probably have said in my letters, that an experienced, sensible agriculturist could not do a better thing than undertake the working of it; but I could never have been so absurd as to advise a man like Fowler Foulke, who never saddled his own horse, or lived one hour without a valet, to come out to the wild American West to manage a backwoods farm."

While my good husband went grumbling on, I put on my bonnet, overshoes, and warm wrappings, to accompany him to the hotel, as our inn now calls itself, to see this broken down English family, who had literally come out to seek their fortunes in the American West.

Poor things! I kept thinking, but I said not a word, for the temerity of their undertaking startled me, who am not easy to startle in the way of bold adventure, and I never talk, you know, when matters look threatening and desperate.

I found the family consisted of father, mother, and eight children. The eldest was a girl of seventeen, the youngest a babe in the arms. Oh! dear, it was a doleful sight!

Mrs. Fowler Foulke was a confirmed invalid, and had been for years. A sweet, gentle woman, who had always been accustomed to the luxurious comforts of that highly civilized English life, which makes such charming ladies and gentlemen. She had never dressed her hair since

she was born—never eaten her breakfast before twelve in the day, and never ordered even, much less looked to, the preparing of the simplest meal.

Mr. Fowler Foulke was a sanguine, warm-hearted English country gentleman, perfectly *au fait* in fine dogs, blood horses, English country life: in short, a pleasant, amiable man, most delightful to meet with socially, but as totally unfit in his way, as was his wife for their new career.

I looked from them to the children; and as my eye rested on the eldest boy, I took courage. He was only fifteen, but he was capable and energetic-looking.

"Where is Edith?" asked the father.

"She is with baby," said Mrs. Foulke; then turning to me, she continued, "Our head nurse left us at the first sea-board town, New York; and the under nurse very shabbily did the same thing at our next stopping place. I have no one to take charge of the children, but my own maid, Janet, who is very delicate and quite unfit to attend to them."

"Oh! that evil will soon be corrected, my dear," said the hopeful Mr. Foulke. "So soon as we are settled at the Saxon Farm, we shall find numbers of the poorer classes of the community quite pleased to have a settled position in a private gentleman's family; a thing they are not much used to, I fancy, St. John."

You know St. John's look when he feels a person to be entirely in the wrong, and a struggle is going on between his good breeding and candor, that inimitable lifting of the eyebrows, pursing up of the lips and involuntary shrug of the shoulders. I relieved his struggle by saying, with a kind laugh, which I meant as a softener to my damper,

"Ah, Mr. Foulke, 'help,' as we Americans call servants, is just the very thing that cannot be found out here in the West."

"Aw, yes!" he responded, in a cheery tone, "among the speculating or working persons of small means, to be sure—but it is quite a different affair when it comes to light service, good wages, with a comfortable, steady home."

St. John's eyebrows grew higher, and lips pouted more than ever. We threw glances across at each other, and he seemed to understand what I wished to say, that there was no use arguing with the man, he must have experience before he could know anything, for he did not attempt to set his friend right, and with that little toss of his head, which expresses such utter hopelessness, he commenced talking about their old memories of England.

I sat beside Mrs. Foulke, trying to listen

patiently and sympathizingly to her conversation, which was like that of all confirmed invalids on her manifold sufferings. I could not, however, help smiling at the complacent consolation she took in the fact, that as far back as great, great-grandmothers on the gentle blood side of her descent, the women had been thus afflicted. Poor, useless, worthless, gentle blood! Better a rougher current, even though not so pure, if it could not bring any other heritage than feeble spines, so soon as nature called on it to perform its healthy duties.

Finding that stereotyped monosyllables were all Mrs. Foulke required, I turned my attention to the gentlemen, while courteously appearing to listen to her. They were talking about the Saxon Farm. How lamentably unfit for his new life every word Mr. Foulke uttered betrayed!

St. John is no agriculturist, but he has good sound common sense, and though a visionary and beautiful dreamer about humanity and all that, he takes practical, straightforward views of life. Work is work to him, and he draws the distinction between bodily and intellectual labor, giving just credit to both, and also knows, what so few do, the difference between real work and make believe. Oh! how high up the eyebrows went, and the ridges of wrinkles in the forehead grew painful to look at, and his poor mouth, which is anything but the handsomest feature of his face, became so hopelessly drawn up and pouched out, that I feared Mrs. Foulke might think it an unfortunate deformity.

St. John tried to set Mr. Foulke right at every turn, but in vain. He was like I was, the first year after my marriage. I had come from a well filled, old established household, where everything was in abundance, and housekeeping appointments had accumulated to a superfluity. I, in my new house, fancied it was the same way; on all emergencies I was incessantly applying mythical, imaginary articles of furniture or crockery.

"What shall I put this in, ma'am?" a maid would ask of some new purchase.

"That! Why do you ask? Of course in a jar, or keg, or basket, or bowl," (as the thing might be.) When probably every jar, keg, basket, and bowl in my possession was filled with its appointed thing. I fancied, very drolly, that such things ought to exist without doubt in quantities, in the recesses of every well regulated household.

So with Mr. Fowler Foulke, he believed that head gardeners, head farmers, and capital tenants were waiting, most certainly, in this out-of-the-way place for his use, and doubtless

would be enchanted to secure such a service as he could offer them.

"So few gentlemen's estates here, my dear fellow!" he exclaimed, "that's so lucky! It will give me the pick and choice of my work people."

"Poor man!" said St. John, that night after we had returned home, "did you ever see any one, Mary, so hopelessly ignorant of that simplest law, only the general necessity for a convenience creates it?"

While they were talking the door opened, and Edith entered the room. She was presented to us, and then went to her mother, to give her, in a soft tone, a little information about baby, and other etceteras of their suite. She arranged her mother's pillows on the sofa—or settee, rather, of the hardest Western country fashion—gave her some drops out of a gold mounted flacon, taken from one of the best appointed London dressing-cases I ever saw; and then seated herself near her brother Ralph, to look over a map of the Saxon Farm. St. John had made, her mother interrupting her every ten minutes for some useless little service, or to send her to see how baby, &c., were.

Edith Foulke was one of the finest specimens I ever met with, of that finest creation in humanity, a country, lady-bred English girl. Now you know I am ordinarily severe on the English, and not at all disposed to exaggerate their merits. I did not come of an old Yankee yeoman family for nothing. But there are some things the English get up better than any other nation, and let them have the credit of them. Among these "some things" ranks a country girl brought up under the influences of cultured associations. She is generally finely developed in body, cleverly enough in mind, and with those delicious, frank, natural manners, which are as free from boldness as from vanity.

Such was Edith Foulke. Although in her eighteenth year, and better developed in form than any American girl of her age, she looked quite the girl yet; there was no appearance of young ladyism in her. She was still a child, ready to come and go at bidding, quiet and unpretending, but quick with response if spoken to, with an open, captivating, intellectual look, and air that had no consciousness, shyness, or boldness in it.

She was fine-looking, too. A good size, carried herself well, every movement told of her country life and habits: a good flower gardener doubtless, a capital horsewoman, and clever executant on some instrument. Her hands and feet were not so small as ours, but large and

capable-looking. "Heroic hands," as our artist friend R—— says, whose beautiful pink, tapering ends turned flexibly back from the first joint. She used them very little, except in good service. If she spoke, they did not move about as we Americans make ours—as graphically as if eager, hot Italian blood flowed in their veins—hers laid still before her, calm, white, and strong-looking.

She had a good face. A great quantity of rich, light brown hair, that waved beautifully over her well-shaped, well-balanced head, and looked as if it longed, like "the gadding vine," to break from the restraint of fillet and comb, and dance down in rippling curls. Her eye was an index of her character, a rich, deep gray, with fiery brown spots starting out ray-like around the pupil, telling of energy and force. Then the look out of them was clear, and open, and as innocent as that of a child. She was a fine, handsome, strong girl, and if my heart took courage at the sight of the good, steady-looking Ralph, it took double courage as I looked at Edith.

The next day I invited them to come to my house to stay with me, as the inn was so uncomfortable for them; and they came, the whole suite, father, mother, eight children, and delicate lady's maid. Poor Janet! she, like her mistress, was a hopelessly invalid. Don't laugh, for the woman was really and truly a sad sufferer. She had been brought up with Mrs. Foulke, her foster sister, the child of her nurse; and like her mistress, had only known life's gentlest, tenderest uses. But she was a good, sensible creature, and the few months she lived, after their settlement at the Saxon Farm, she was of infinite use to Edith.

I made them all stay with me until spring. Mr. Fowler Foulke went backwards and forwards between Concord and the Saxon Farm, never discouraged, never seeing things in their real light, and always looking forward to the establishment of his family at the farm, to right everything that went wrong.

"Like a kaleidoscope, madam," he would say to me, "this most admired confusion will settle down into some sort of form and shape. Grotesque probably, but nevertheless form and shape—form and shape."

Edith watched my housekeeping and management closely. When allowed to absent herself from her mother and baby, she attached herself to my steps like a pet kitten. She took to work bravely; insisted on being taught everything, and it went to my heart to see that tenderly bred girl grow hot and crimson over the weekly

ironing and baking, showing the eager enthusiasm she might have displayed in studying some pleasant, but difficult accomplishment.

When the spring opened, they all went to the Saxon Farm. I accompanied them, and staid a fortnight with them. It was a tolerably comfortable house, quite Western in its build, not like it is now in any way, but in the same pleasant position, that same grove of oaks extending across the north, and the same sweetly sloping hill in front, but oh! so wild and comfortless within and without.

Their furniture was of the most useless kind, for when their boxes arrived, after costing them an enormous sum for duty, transportation, &c., I found in them only costly, luxurious articles of drawing-room, library, and bed-room furniture, totally unfit for their present circumstances. Edith's fine, grand piano; Mrs. Foulke's superb harp; all Mr. Fowler Foulke's fine collection of valuable books, prints, some pieces of statuary; a few lovely paintings, that had cost so much of their lost fortune; richly canopied beds; costly D'Aubusson carpets, and tapestried-covered lounges, but not one real, useful thing for actual house service.

"We left behind all the common, ordinary things," said Mr. Foulke, with an approving nod, as the various articles emerged from their boxes, "and brought only those the least likely to be met with here."

"And the least needed," I thought, but I said nothing; and Edith, whose perceptions were so quick, looked aghast without uttering a word. Not a sheet, not a towel, not an ordinary table or chair. A superb set of plate, and some lovely china, but not one dish or cup fit for every day use. I had not foreseen this at all, or during the long winter I should have counseled the preparing of these actual necessities. But it was too late now to lament over that, so we sent off down to New Orleans for what was absolutely needed, and until they could arrive we all contributed in Concord from our own things. And yet Mr. Foulke remained delightfully unconscious of his absurdity, attributing all the inconvenience to the miserable half-savage state of the country.

It would be an endless story if I were to enter into detail over that housekeeping and farm-keeping. The housekeeping was the better of the two, however, although to accomplish it, it hurried poor Janet into her grave the first year, and made a sad drudge of my beautiful Edith. Those hands showed themselves truly "heroic." Poor girl, how she labored! Her father's six o'clock dinner, and two o'clock luncheon; her

mother's twelve o'clock breakfast, and long toilet preparations, and the children! Oh! my dear, it was a fearful amount of labor, for very often she had no help but her brothers; the two youngest, being unfortunately girls, were too young to be of use.

But those boys! Ralph, Edgar, Fowler, Alfred, and Philip, they were real treasures. They gardened, and carried wood, and built fires, and did everything in their power. Alf had what Topffer calls *la bosse*, he was a true artist, and clever at everything. He was of the most use in the housekeeping, and in cooking was a marvel. He used to put on a white apron and pointed cap, when he assisted Edith in the kitchen, and call himself "Ude."

Mr. Fowler Foulke knew nothing of these vulgar details of the housekeeping, he always ignored them. If a dish did not suit him, he would say,

"Edith, my child, draw the attention of the cook to so and so," as the thing might be.

Then Alf would look quizzical on Edith, listen as seriously as though her *cuisine* contained all the numberless appliances and attendants of their fine English one at Fowler Hall. I was, of course, let in behind the scenes, and knew all their makeshifts and straits.

Mrs. Foulke lingered on a few years, adding a ninth baby to the family, which only waited a few weeks, and then was gathered up into the good, blessed rest of death, with its mother, and both were laid in the same coffin and grave. Poor Edith! how hard her mother's death was for her to bear!

"My darling, my baby mother!" she sobbed out so touchingly, as she leaned over her poor, wasted body. "Oh! Mrs. Dalton, I had hoped to keep her always. It was so sweet to nurse her! And why could she not have lived? So many invalids live longer than healthy people. Dear Mrs. Dalton, what am I to do without my mother?"

Poor child! Her trouble and hard labor began to tell upon her, and I feared she would soon follow the mother and baby, in the long illness she had immediately after their death, but she rallied; youth and womanhood is so persistent.

Mr. Foulke's farming did not succeed. Yearly his crops failed, of course, for he knew nothing of managing the affair. Poor Ralph tried his best, but his father constantly interfered with, and thwarted his plans; then he was but a boy, and inexperienced also. Matters grew worse and worse, and one autumn, about six months after Mrs. Foulke's death, when affairs looked their darkest, St. John found poor Fowler Foulke

dead in his library. A laudanum bottle in his pocket told the story, but we destroyed the bottle, and encouraged the children to think his death had arisen from some natural cause. Poor, poor fellow! just think what a state of despair and anguish must have been reached, to have led that gay, merry-hearted, hopeful man, who shrunk so sensitively from all pain, physical as well as mental, to take such a fearful step.

After the funeral, we held a consultation amongst us, about the disposing of the family. We concluded to divide them among us, to consider them as our own children, but to leave to them the division and choice of home. When St. John and I first told them of it, we were surprised to see the manner in which the children received our offer. They all grouped around Edith, those five brave boys, and the two little girls. Edith looked rigid and pained. She remained silent for a few moments, as if summoning up not energy or strength, but perception and judgment, then turning to the boys, said,

"Take Agnes and Bertha, and leave me to talk alone with our good friends." She held out her hands to them, which they eagerly grasped, adding with a hard smile that looked as if cut in stone, "Trust to me, boys."

"I know," she continued, as soon as they had left the room, "that all is gone—all! We no longer have a right to the roof we live under, and yet I have promised those boys to keep one roof over us. Now tell me how this can be done? In the last letter from England before——" she stopped an instant, then heroically swallowing her choking sobs, she continued in a low, husky voice, "I received news of a little legacy left me by my godmother; it is not much, only about seven hundred dollars, but it will buy us a little home, and then we must work. You generously offer to give us homes, give us work that we may live united. I cannot let these children be separated."

Such a laudable desire was to be encouraged, of course. St. John disposed of the farm, and of the remaining articles of costly luxury, which had not already disappeared silently to meet the former emergencies of the family, and with Edith's little legacy bought a portion of the Saxon Farm, that pretty place called the Glen, where then stood a small, one story cabin; this was enlarged, the boys helping in the carpentering. It was only a little distance from Concord, so some of the mothers, who had grown tired of teaching their children themselves, concluded to make up a school for Edith; my Fanny and Constance went to her for music.

Brother Dean took Edgar to teach him engineering. Ralph was to farm the little fields of the Glen, and to be employed by the new owner of the Saxon Farm. Fowler and Philip were still young, they helped Ralph and studied with Edith. Alfred, the cook, was a delicate boy, and unfit for rough uses; Edith's ambition was to give him the education of an artist; therefore he was the only unemployed one. He was too young to start out into the world to seek his fortune, so, for a year or two, we all concluded it was most advisable to let him stay at home, and wait for his future to shape itself first.

Edith was, of course, much admired, and could have had many a comfortable home of her own for the mere smiling for it, but she had no heart for any one but her family. Brother Dean had a hard struggle with himself to submit calmly to her sorrowful rejection of him, but he got over it bravely, and was always her best adviser; and our excellent friend, Mr. Fisher, of the Maple Hollow, who is so rich, you know, would not take Edith's "no" for an answer.

"I have only a sister and daughter heart," she would say, laughingly, when we would tease her about marrying.

The fact was, Edith was too highly cultured to feel much heart sympathy with the men who offered themselves to her. They were good, intelligent men, but they lacked a certain polish, which is more to such women as Edith than intellect.

One fine summer, who should come to pay us a visit but my cousin, handsome Tom Turner? a fine young bachelor of comfortable means and charming presence. He had inherited a nice fortune from his father, but save me he had scarcely a near relative living. He was Boston bred. You know I am true Yankee, although I have lived out West half my life, therefore I think "Boston bred" of some consequence. After his majority, he had gone to Europe, where he had traveled and lingered about for some years. Now, on his return, he had come out West to pay me a visit, and seek some new amusement, and he found it, for he and Edith fell desperately in love with each other, of course, for they were just suited, and fitted. The wonder was, they should have ever met, for such capital matches rarely encounter one another. It was one of those things that when they occur in life make us say, "If we had read it in a book, we should have said it was unnatural."

But natural or not, it took place, and for six

months created about as much delicate distress as love affairs do that seem disposed to go awry. Edith, to our surprise and vexation, rejected Tom as positively as she had brother Dean, although she made no secret of loving him dearly. She would not give any reason for her no, nor hold out any hope for the future: in short, was as unreasonable as we women are, when we take it into our heads that we must make martyrs of ourselves unnecessarily. Suddenly it flashed across my stupid comprehension why she acted so. - She would not leave her family, and she could not ask Tom to marry them also.

"Impossible!" cried Tom, when I told him my suspicion, "she cannot, for one instant, suppose I intended to separate her from them. Why it's one of her greatest charms. I loved her first for that alone, for hanging on to those children—then you know how I have always coveted a large family of brothers and sisters."

And he put on his hat, and wrapping his Tweed around him, tramped off over the frosty ground in the bright winter moonlight, near bed time as it was, to the Glen. He found the family all assembled around their English supper-table. Walking right in to the midst of them, he said,

"Boys, I have come to ask you to take me among you as your brother, and marry me to Edith. I shall not live anywhere hereafter, but right in the midst of this family. I want to be elder brother to all of you but Edith—will you take me?"

And the handsome, frank fellow held out his hands to them, which they all seized with a fine frolicsome burst of laughter, for the boys were very fond of him. They gave a hearty consent, adopted him as their brother on the spot; while poor Edith sat by, growing pale and red by turns, "looking as handsome as an angel," as Tom said when he reported the scene to me.

But Edith was still inexorable. "He was infatuated," she said. "He might grow tired of them. It was asking too much of him. It was not just," &c., &c.

I felt not a little provoked at her scruples, but Tom did not. He was patient as a saint.

"I'll manage her," he said; and one day came in announcing himself the owner of the Saxon Farm. "Ralph, Fowler, Edgar, and I, are joint masters," he added. "I shall get the boys from her, for even her shadow, Alf, is on my side, and has consented to go to Rome with me next year when I take her, and Agnes and Bertha advocate my cause. She'll yield by spring, see if she does not."

And she did. In the latter part of winter they were married, and for their wedding trip they went to Europe, where you met them, taking with them Alf and the girls.

Tom settled on the girls the Glen Place, and, during their absence, a rich coal mine has been discovered on it, making both of them fine heiresses. The Saxon Farm and an adjoining one are to be farmed for the benefit of the family; and Ralph, who is manager, is to have one division as he pays for it, out of his profits, which are not small, I assure you, for Ralph is a successful farmer. Next year we expect Tom, Edith, and the girls home.

I knew you would be charmed with Edith. She is a darling. As you say, "A perfect woman, nobly planned." My Vivian thinks Agnes quite as lovely. I should not be surprised at a double marriage in the family, for, to tell the truth, which is a secret just now, Ralph and my Fan are to be married so soon as the family return from abroad.

There's Ralph now! Look how superbly his horse leaped that gate, and my pretty Fan stands in the porch, looking as proud of him

as if he were an Alexander. She's pretty, is she not? And that vine-covered door-way and brilliant setting sunlight make a beautiful picture of the whole—maiden and lover, and the panting steed beside them, with the quaint old house and rich woods in the background.

I wonder where my Vivian is, he ought to be down from the Hill Farm this evening. I must go and ask Ralph about him. And there's St. John coming up the walk, and Fan crying out that the coffee will be cold, standing waiting so long in the library, if we do not come in. Saucy girl, little she cared how cold it got until Ralph arrived. Here, give me your arm, and after one look from my dear old maple tree, we will leave the hill and go in.

Ah, my friend, this is a beautiful world, and human life is its loveliest possession, for even the trouble and wild wrath that cut deep into the hearts of many—giving them a measure of darkness fearful to think of—does not mar the beautiful thing, for there is a mysterious blending going on of love and joy with the anguish, that works marvelously together in the great labor of the soul's development.

WAY-WARD: AN ACTING CHARADE.

BY S. ANNIE FROST, AUTHOR OF "PARLOR CHARADES AND PROVERBS."

CHARACTERS.

Mr. Mansfield, an elderly gentleman—Frank Graham Mansfield, his nephew—Lizzie Harding Colton, Mr. Mansfield's ward—Pattie, Miss Colton's maid.

SCENE I.—WAY.

Scene.—Mr. Mansfield's parlor.

Enter Lizzie.

LIZZIE.—So here I am, at home once more! How cozy everything looks! there's my piano, and my books, everything just as I left it, four years ago. Four years, what an age! Well, I was sorry to leave school, too. They were all very kind to me, and then—(sighs)—well I came off in such a hurry I could not tell him the truth about myself, so I don't imagine we can ever meet again. "The course of true love never did run smooth," as Milton, or Byron, or some of those old fellows justly observed. Well, I won't allow myself to pine away for love, at seventeen, that is a little too absurd. (Sings.) *Enter Mr. Mansfield.*

MR. MANSFIELD.—Good morning, my dear. I am glad to find you in such good spirits.

LIZZIE.—Good morning, sir. I am so glad to be at home again, that my spirits must be good.

MR. MANSFIELD.—It has been my desire always to make this a pleasant home for you. You like it, eh?

LIZZIE.—Indeed I do.

MR. MANSFIELD.—Well enough to live in forever, eh? To be this little mistress always, my dear.

LIZZIE.—(Aside.)—Mercy! what does he mean?

MR. MANSFIELD.—To marry and settle down here? Ah! do you like it well enough for that?

LIZZIE.—(Aside.)—Is that meant for a proposal? (Aloud.) Really, Mr. Mansfield, I entertain for you a great esteem!

MR. MANSFIELD.—(Aside.)—Eh! what!

LIZZIE.—But for a husband, my dear sir, I, you will forgive me, but I think a younger man—I—in fact—(Stops confused.)

MR. MANSFIELD.—Why, child, (laughs heartily,) you don't suppose I want to marry you, do you?

LIZZIE.—I—I—(aside.)—what a dunce I have made of myself!

MR. MANSFIELD.—No, indeed, my dear. My dear departed Sarah Jane was my companion for sixteen years. The least said about bliss, in my case, the better. You are a very nice little girl, and, no doubt, will make a very nice little wife, not having had sixteen years' practice in studying the way to torment a husband; but I think I will remain a widower. I, (makes a wry face,) in fact, my dear, I've tried matrimony, and have quite satisfied the sentiment.

LIZZIE.—I am sure, sir, you do not need a wife; you live so comfortably, that it is the pleasantest home in Woodville.

MR. MANSFIELD.—I am glad you think so! I am very glad you think so! You won't care to leave it, then, will you? You will preside here for your old guardian all his life. Oh! I forgot. I came to have a little serious conversation with you. Let me give you a chair. (They sit.) You know, my dear, your father and myself were old friends, and, when he died, he left you in my care, with one request: that, when you were seventeen years of age, you should marry my nephew, Frank Mansfield!

LIZZIE.—Your nephew! I did not know you had a nephew.

MR. MANSFIELD.—No, my dear. I never had him here. I was afraid too much intimacy in childhood would run into brotherly and sisterly affection. He has been in Europe for seven years, and is now on his way home. He writes that he spent a few weeks in Clayton with a traveling companion; you did not see him, then? No, of course not! You were in school, attending to your studies. Well, my dear, he'll be at home this week, and we'll get all ready and have a really splendid wedding.

LIZZIE.—But, my dear sir, I may not like your nephew.

MR. MANSFIELD.—Oh! but you must like him! All your property depends upon your marrying with my consent, and I shall give it, freely. I mean to settle all my property upon Frank, in this case, and let you both live here with me. Tut! tut! to talk of not taking him. Now really, my dear, my heart is set on this plan, and I must have my own way.

LIZZIE.—And what, pray, becomes of my way!

MR. MANSFIELD.—Dear me! What is your way, compared to mine? Now do be a sensible child; because if you don't both consent, you are both beggars—there! I have written to Frank to that effect; and I hold your property, too. You must accept his hand.

LIZZIE.—Suppose he does not offer it to me?

MR. MANSFIELD.—Oh! nonsense. He must offer it! I have told him what a splendid fortune you have, and he isn't such a fool as to oppose me in this.

LIZZIE.—(Proudly.)—So I am held at a value of dollars and cents. Your nephew will court me to spend my money. Really, sir, you pay me a high compliment.

MR. MANSFIELD.—Was there ever such a child? My dear—

LIZZIE.—I have heard enough of this hateful scheme. I trust your nephew has more sense of manliness than to become a party to any such bargain. He will probably refuse to comply with your wish.

MR. MANSFIELD.—(Angrily.)—If he dares to do it I'll—well, there I am getting into a passion! I won't get into a passion for the whims of two children! My wife had her way for sixteen years; now, I am determined to have my way. Remember!

Exit Mr. Mansfield.

LIZZIE.—Remember! as if I were likely to forget. A pretty finale to my boarding-school romance. I am to be sold to Mr. Mansfield's nephew. A house, guardian, and a husband for the amount of my fortune. Well, my dear guardian, you are determined to have your way; I am equally determined to have mine. Now we'll see whose will is the strongest, and whose way will prove to be the chosen one. *Curtain falls.*

SCENE II.—WARD.

Scene.—Same as scene I.

Enter Mr. Mansfield and Lizzie.

MR. MANSFIELD.—So I must go to New York for a few weeks. It is most unexpected and unfortunate, but there is no help for it! My dear little ward, you will remember your promise.

LIZZIE.—(Coldly.)—I have promised to receive your nephew with civility, and let him have a chance to propose to me, if he wishes it, and you have left me free to postpone my answer till you return. I will keep my promise, sir.

MR. MANSFIELD.—There now, don't look so cross about it. Perhaps you may like each other, after all. (*Looks at his watch.*) Ten o'clock! I must be off. Good-bye, my dear! LIZZIE.—Good-bye, sir! *Exit Mr. Mansfield.*

LIZZIE.—Oh! dear, it is too bad! All the pleasure I anticipated in coming home ruined! (*Sobs.*) Horrid—fellow, (*sobs*), I hate him. *Enter Pattie.*

PATTIE.—Why, Miss Lizzie, what is the matter?

LIZZIE.—Oh! Pattie, I am the most unhappy girl in the world.

PATTIE.—You, Miss! You!

LIZZIE.—I was so pleased at the idea of coming home again, and now I've had all my pleasure spoiled. Mr. Mansfield wants me to marry his nephew.

PATTIE.—Is that all? Why, Mrs. Morse, the housekeeper, says he's the most splendid young man ever lived.

LIZZIE.—Pattie, will you never, never repeat it, if I tell you a secret?

PATTIE.—A secret! Oh! I do love a secret. No, Miss, I'll never tell. Tortures shan't make me tell it, Miss.

LIZZIE.—Pattie, I'm in love!

PATTIE.—Oh! Jiminy!

LIZZIE.—It is the most romantic story. You see, Pattie, I was out walking, about a month ago, where there was a horse ran away, and met me in the road; in another minute—oh! Pattie, I shudder to think what might have happened, when—is that door shut?

PATTIE.—Yes, Miss. Oh! please do go on, Miss, it's just like a story, Miss.

LIZZIE.—Just as I gave myself up for lost, a young man—

PATTIE.—I felt that a-coming.

LIZZIE.—He sprang forward, stopped the horse, gave it to the men who were in pursuit, and turned to me just in time—

PATTIE.—To catch your fainting form!

LIZZIE.—Yes, Pattie. You see, Pattie, one must faint at such times; and I had on a new white bonnet, and my best silk, so I could not fall on the horrid dusty road. He was so graceful, Pattie, he didn't mash my bonnet a bit; but just let me recline gracefully in his arms till I recovered.

PATTIE.—Oh! that's too lovely! Well, Miss?

LIZZIE.—I murmured, "My preserver!" and he gently soothed my agitation. Oh! Pattie!

PATTIE.—Yes, Miss, it is sweet. Oh! I know how you must have felt—as if you were dipped in molasses.

LIZZIE.—Bathed in happiness, Pattie. Well, to make a long story short, he escorted me back to school, and I met him every day afterward till I came home. He asked my name; but you see, Pattie, I was afraid the teachers would hear of it, so I only gave him part of my name. I told him it was Lizzie Harding, and left out the rest. You know my name is Lizzie Harding Colton.

PATTIE.—What was his name?

LIZZIE.—Frank Graham! (*Walks to window.*) Pattie! see! He is here! He has found me out! Look! there, just passing up the street.

PATTIE.—Why that is Mr. Mansfield. I have seen his picture often in the old gentleman's bureau drawer, when I cleared it up. He's looking for the house, see! and now I think of it, Miss, that's his name, too—Frank Graham Mansfield.

LIZZIE.—Pattie, I've an idea!

PATTIE.—Laud, Miss!

LIZZIE.—Pattie, I'll find out whether he really loved me. I'll disguise myself completely, and then we will see! If he offers himself to me, it is for the money, if he is true—

PATTIE.—But wouldn't it be easier to see him as you are?

LIZZIE.—No, Pattie; because, if he *did* propose, I could never trust him. Has he not come here on a speculation? No, Pattie, I'll try him. Besides, to be ready to take him,

is too bad, after all the fuss I've made. I'll do as I please, in matrimonial matters, if I am Mr. Mansfield's ward.

PATTIE.—He's coming into the garden, Miss! Oh! my, it's more like a story now than ever. He's ringing the bell now!

LIZZIE.—Come, Pattie, you must help me dress, and I will tell you what to say to Mr. Frank Graham Mansfield.

Exeunt Lizzie and Pattie.

Enter Frank.

FRANK.—This, then, is the place! My uncle in New York, and I am to be received by the young lady proposed as the future Mrs. Mansfield, my uncle's ward, Miss Colton. Wonder what her first name is! I doubt if it is anything half so delicious as Lizzie! Ah! Lizzie! Lizzie! Well, I came here to please my uncle; but, if I marry any Miss Colton, may Lizzie cut me out of my inheritance by marrying my uncle.

Enter Pattie.

PATTIE.—(*Aside.*)—Ain't them moustaches enough to melt the heart of a stone? (*Aloud.*) Ahem!

FRANK.—Ah! what's this! Is Miss Colton at home, my dear?

PATTIE.—Yes, sir, she's at home!

FRANK.—Can I see her?

PATTIE.—I don't know, sir. She's very busy writing the life of Kong-wong-par-jigger.

FRANK.—Who?

PATTIE.—Kong-wong-par-jigger, king of the Cannibal Islands.

FRANK.—So she is writing his life. Pray, is Miss Colton of a literary turn of mind?

PATTIE.—She's of all sorts of a turn of mind, sir. She gets up at three o'clock to observe the stars, and study as—

FRANK.—Astronomy?

PATTIE.—Yes, sir. Then she pokes in the garden awhile to study botany; and then she writes, and writes, and reads. She's got a whole lot of worms in a box, to study something else.

FRANK.—(*Aside.*)—A pleasant prospect for her future husband.

PATTIE.—(*Aside.*)—He has not heard half yet. (*Aloud.*) Would you like to see Miss Colton's museum, sir? She has two snakes that are quite tame.

FRANK.—No, thank you. Let Miss Colton know that I am here.

PATTIE.—Yes, sir.

Exit Pattie.

FRANK.—My special horror, from a boy, was a pedantic, strong-minded woman, and here I am caged with one for weeks. Uncle! appear and deliver your miserable nephew! Oh! here she comes! Her very tread is literary.

Enter Lizzie, dressed in a faded calico wrapper, made loose and long, a large cap, green spectacles, and black lace mittens.

LIZZIE.—I was informed that a gentleman wanted to see me.

FRANK.—Myself, Miss Colton. I am Mr. Mansfield's nephew; you may have expected me. I do not mistake—you are Miss Colton, my uncle's ward?

LIZZIE.—The same, sir. Did I expect you? Let me see! Pattie! (*Enter Pattie.*) Bring me my memorandum book. (*Exit Pattie.*) I have so much now to occupy my mind that I am obliged, sir, to keep a memorandum book for trivial things.

FRANK.—(*Aside.*)—Trivial things! This is pleasant, truly. (*Aloud.*) You are quite right, Miss.

Enter Pattie, hands Lizzie a book, and exits.

LIZZIE.—(*Referring to book.*)—Let me see! Tuesday, make dissection of monkey. Wednesday, pull two teeth for the gardener. Thursday, ah! here it is: Mr. Mansfield, my future husband. Ah! yes, I recollect now. Well, my friend, it was entirely unnecessary to disturb me at my

studies. I have ordered my books to be put in order, and I shall have some sort of a wedding dress made, I suppose. That's all!

FRANK.—Do you mean to say that you have no personal feeling in the matter?

LIZZIE.—None at all. Are you fond of geology, or natural history? I will escort you to my cabinet.

FRANK.—I prefer to remain here a short time. My ride from the city was quite a fatiguing one.

LIZZIE.—(Aside.)—I am sure I don't know what to say now. (Aloud.) I have the last edition of Smith on the Bumps, if you would like to peruse it. Are you fond of phrenology? By-the-way, let me examine your head. (Forces him into a chair, and tumbles his hair, pulling it occasionally, when he jumps, makes a face, and sits down again.) Let me see: Acquisitiveness large—(pulls)—do keep still! Patience small—(pulls)—can't you keep quiet? Ambition small. Avarice large. Obedience large. Manliness small.

FRANK.—(Rising.)—You are growing personal!

LIZZIE.—I beg pardon! One forgets the forms of society in the love of science.

Enter Pattie.

PATTIE.—Luncheon is on the table.

Exit Pattie.

FRANK.—Allow me to escort you to the dining-room.

LIZZIE.—I must go to my room first, to put my papers in order. I will join you presently.

Exit Lizzie.

FRANK.—So this is my uncle's ward, my future wife. No! not my wife. Long may she remain to comfort my uncle's old age; but it must be as his ward, not as his niece. I would marry the Encyclopedia in his library, before I would this fearful ward of his.

Curtain falls.

SCENE III.—WAYWARD.

Scene—Same as scenes I and II.

Curtain rising, discovers Lizzie seated at a table which is covered with books, maps, pens, ink and paper.

LIZZIE.—(Rising and coming forward.)—Two weeks to-day since Frank came here. What have I accomplished by my wayward freak; this masquerade attire I now detest. His courtesy, gentle deference to my whims, his intelligence and manly, pleasant manner have been so frankly offered, that I am forty times as much in love as I was before. My guardian will be at home in an hour or two, and I must resume my proper character, having gained exactly nothing.

Enter Pattie.

PATTIE.—Mr. Mansfield sent me to ask you if he might have a private interview with you, Miss? Oh! Miss Lizzie, it's a-coming now, for sure!

LIZZIE.—Tell him I am at leisure now. (Exit Pattie.) Oh! how I tremble! I wish it were over. If he comes to offer me his hand now, how I will despise him! and yet, will he ever come near me when he knows the truth? He is here. (Sits down.)

Enter Frank.

FRANK.—Good morning, Miss Colton. (Sits down.)

LIZZIE.—You desired to speak with me?

FRANK.—Upon a subject which it pains me to reflect upon. One of such delicacy that I have, day after day, postponed this interview, in order to avoid it; but now, expecting my uncle's return every moment, I can no longer put it off. I came to tell you that it is impossible for me to comply with his wishes, with regard to our marriage.

LIZZIE.—Is this meant for an insult, sir?

FRANK.—Far from it. I know you must regard this conduct as most rude and ungallant; but is it not better to speak now, than to entail the miseries of an ill-assorted marriage upon both of us? Believe me, I admire and respect your high talents; but—but, to be frank with you, I love another.

LIZZIE.—Another? (Aside.) Now for it.

FRANK.—You will understand now the motive for my rude address to yourself.

LIZZIE.—But this other? Perhaps I know her.

FRANK.—Quite possible. It is but justice to her to say that there is no engagement between us; though I may love her. At present, I do not even know her address. Her name is Lizzie Harding.

LIZZIE.—My dressmaker!

FRANK.—(Eagerly.)—You know her, then? Can you give me her address?

LIZZIE.—Wait a moment! It may not be the same one. This person made my dresses when I was at boarding-school, in Clayton. She lived at the school.

FRANK.—It must be the same. Where is she now?

LIZZIE.—Surely you do not wish to marry a poor dressmaker, when my thousands are at your service; for I will not conceal from you that you have won my heart entirely. My fortune is freely yours, and I can overlook this boyish love.

FRANK.—It is the love of my life.

LIZZIE.—Wayward boy!

FRANK.—I may seem wayward, but my heart is true to its first idol.

LIZZIE.—(Taking a miniature from the table drawer.)—Is this like your Lizzie?

FRANK.—(Opening it.)—Herself! It seems to breathe—to smile upon me! (Kisses it.)

Lizzie slips behind him, throws off the wrapper, glasses, mittens, cap, and has a light dress, curls, and bare arms, as in first scene.

FRANK.—Those soft, loving eyes, how well I remember them!

LIZZIE.—Frank!

FRANK.—(Turning.)—Lizzie! My dear Lizzie. (Embraces her.) Why, where is Miss Colton?

LIZZIE.—Here. Lizzie Harding Colton, who, in a wayward fit of doubt, tested your love to find it true. You forgive me, Frank?

Enter Mr. Mansfield.

MR. MANSFIELD.—Hey day! what's all this? (Frank and Lizzie stand confused.) Well, upon my word! Here are two pretty specimens of wayward children. (To Frank.) Did you not write to me that it was impossible for you to marry my ward?

FRANK.—My dear uncle, I—

MR. MANSFIELD.—Hold your tongue, sir; (to Lizzie;) and you, Miss, what have you to say?

LIZZIE.—Only this: that if you will forgive your wayward ward this time; she will try to be a most dutiful niece.

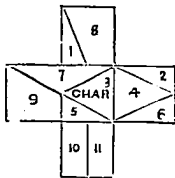
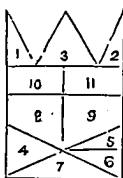
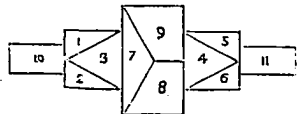
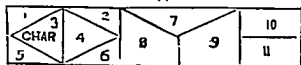
MR. MANSFIELD.—(To Frank.)—Come here, you rogue! You don't deserve; but, as I don't approve of such ardent embraces as I saw just now, in any but lovers, why—take her! I declare I'm the happiest man in America, if (to audience) those present will join me in wishing happiness to my wayward children.

Curtain falls.

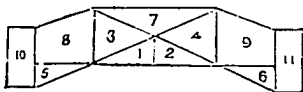
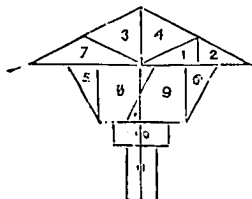
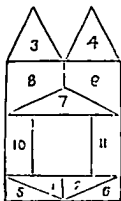
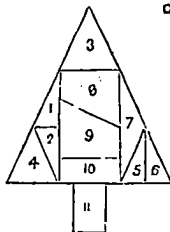
PARLOR PUZZLES.

THE CARDBOARD.—Cut a cardboard as in figure A, and
with the pieces these different diagrams may be formed.

A



CHARING CROSS.



REDMAN'S RUN.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

[Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by Frank Lee Benedict, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 354.

CHAPTER XV.

LIKE one in a dream I heard the woman's exclamation, "Not guilty! The murderer is there!"

I saw her point toward Maurice—saw him cower down in his seat—heard the shouts and confusion which arose—but after that I have no clear recollection of anything that took place.

I did not faint, but my senses seemed locked in a trance. When I came to myself, Mr. Grant was holding a glass of water to my lips, and people were bending toward me with looks of sympathy. Order had been restored, and a solemn silence reigned throughout the room—horror and astonishment were depicted upon every countenance—even the stony faced judge looked troubled and shaken.

I saw Prudence weeping silently; her lips moving in prayer; and a little way off Maurice sat, livid and sullen, guarded by two officers.

I do not know what ceremonies passed, but at length I beheld the woman upon the witness stand prepared to give her evidence. It was the poor creature whom I had twice seen, but there was no longer a trace of insanity in her appearance. She was dreadfully emaciated, looking more like a corpse than a living woman, I felt almost as if the dead had arisen to protect me.

She was about to speak when Maurice cried out,

"I will not have my life sworn away in this manner! That woman is crazy—it is a trick—her evidence is worthless."

"I am not crazy!" replied the woman; "I was so once, driven mad by suffering and wrong. There are those here who can testify to my being in my right mind—let them be examined."

I dimly remember hearing the gentleman who had entered the court-room with her called upon for his testimony. He was a noted physician, and showed a certificate from three medical men of equal celebrity, declaring the woman's entire sanity.

Other forms must have been gone through, but I can recall nothing more until I heard that woman speaking again—every faculty of my

being was absorbed in the intense eagerness with which I listened to her words.

"I had been at the house before—I was crazy then, but I had consciousness enough left to know that I wished to see Mr. Redman. I did see him, and by his orders I was again consigned to that prison, where I had worn out so many terrible years."

"Who put you in that asylum at first?" interposed the district attorney.

The woman hesitated—a passion of spent agony swept over her face—she looked appealingly toward my lawyer, but did not speak.

"You are not obliged to answer any questions of that nature," said Mr. Grant.

"But what did you want of Mr. Redman?"

"I once had a child," said the woman, with a violent effort, "I wished to know where it was buried."

She did not weep. The anguish she suffered had burned at her heart for so many years that she had no tears left.

After a pause, she went on in a cold, monotonous tone, which contrasted strangely with her words.

"After I was taken back to the asylum I had a long illness—how many weeks it lasted I do not know, for no one took the trouble to answer the questions I afterward asked concerning it—but when I recovered, my senses had come back to me, and, since that time, I have been in full and complete possession of them.

"Long after I was able to think and reason clearly, I had not the power to talk or to sit up, for the fever had so worn away my bodily strength that I was helpless as an infant. But my mind grew stronger every day, and never once betrayed the slightest symptom of falling back into its former disordered state.

"Those about me evidently did not perceive the change; if they had known that my reason had returned, I do not suppose it would have made any difference in my position; they would have detained me a close prisoner all the same, perhaps have guarded me even more carefully."

"But why?" interposed the attorney. "You do not tell us what reason the person who placed

you there had for keeping you confined after you had regained your senses?"

"I have been told that I need not answer such questions," said the woman, "and I will not do it. Perhaps they would have released me—I cannot tell—it makes no difference now.

"At all events, from the very first, I concealed from those about me the change that had taken place. For the first time in many years, I was able to call up, distinctly, the events of my past life. It could not in any way effect my testimony to make them public, and I, therefore, decline to do so. But during the weeks I passed in that convalescent state, while still too feeble to sit up much, or to talk, if I had felt so disposed, I had arranged a plan in my mind, by which I believed it would be possible for me to escape, and effectually, any future efforts to restore me to the restraint and horrible life which I had so long endured.

"I do not tell you of my sufferings during my sojourn in that asylum, although I can remember much that occurred even during the time that I was most insane. I was treated cruelly, and, were I to relate the half that I endured, it would be set down as the ravings of a mad woman."

I know that here the woman was interrupted; a short discussion followed concerning the irrelevancy of her evidence. The woman turned toward the judge with a strange appealing look.

"Let her tell her story in her own way," he said.

After that they allowed her to proceed. Jury and audience were too much interested to remember that her manner of speech was unlike the testimony given in a court of justice, although every word bore the stamp of truth.

"Gradually my strength came back; I could sit up, walk about, and my appetite increased daily. The food they gave me would not have been fit even for a sick animal; but such as it was I ate it, my strength thrived upon it through the firm determination I had to escape from that loathsome place.

"The nurse never talked to me, left me alone a great deal of the time; and, for days, except when the regular hours for meals came round, I sat in my room without a human being near me, and the only sounds that reached my ears were the horrible ravings of the mad people in the cells below.

"Those who had charge of me, at last believed that I was gradually sinking into a state that would terminate in complete idiocy. They made no scruple of saying so before me, but I never betrayed any sign of having understood

their brutal remarks. I never once feared it myself; my mind was strong, and every faculty as acute as it had been at any period of my former life. I felt like one who had awakened from the dead; the broken recollections which I retained of my madness, were like horrible nightmares that had haunted me in the tomb.

"I did not know why I wished to live. Often-times I asked myself that question, but there was nothing in my soul which could give answer. Long before, I had passed out of my place in this world, and I had no more power to return to it than a ghost would have to claim the rights he had bequeathed to the living. I reflected upon those things, yet the desire to live grew daily stronger. I was to learn at length why God had brought me back from the darkness in which my senses had so long struggled, but the time had not yet come. During the whole period of my convalescence it was only a firm determination, a strange longing to live, to revisit the haunts of my past suffering, such as I can fancy a spirit might have to return to its earthly home.

"At last, I could leave my room, and they allowed me to walk about the piazza when the sun shone. I was so skeleton-like in appearance, I pretended to be so weak, that they allowed me a certain degree of liberty which would otherwise have been denied. But in reality I was strong—strong from the very power of a newly-awakened will. But I bore with patience the lagging days. I knew that I should never have more than one opportunity to escape, and the slightest suspicion of my scheme once aroused in the minds of my tormentors, would be the signal for flinging me into captivity more relentless and terrible than I had even before endured.

"I betrayed no sign of reason, or of acuteness sufficient to make them fear any such attempt. I appeared even to forget from one day to another the passages which led into the piazza, where they allowed me to walk: and the nurse grumbled exceedingly at having to take so much trouble on my account.

"She ought to be put in with the idiots," I heard her one day remark to a companion; 'it would save a deal of pains.'

"But she's not idiotic yet," the other replied.

"Well, she would be in a week from the force of example," was the response, and then they both laughed with a fiendish disregard of the daily sufferings before their eyes, which was fairly terrifying.

"That conversation made me afraid of over-acting my part; so that when the physician

again made his visits I appeared less stupid, although I remained perfectly quiet, refusing to talk, and apparently as incapable as ever of using my mind.

"She is not idiotic," he said, to the nurse; "but she seems as crazy as ever; she'll be more quiet than formerly, I think."

"I saw there was no danger of the nurse being allowed to have me removed to the idiots' ward, and my courage returned. I do not know that I could have borne that torture. There was a window in the hall, from which I could look down into the yard where they sat on sunny days playing with straws, lying about like sleepy animals, or crying in impotent agony like babes, but the sight was so fearful I never dared pause long to look at them.

"The opportunity of escape offered itself unexpectedly, after all my days and nights of anxious watching and plans.

"One afternoon, I was sitting on the piazza hemming a piece of coarse cloth, for I had some time before asked the nurse to give me work to do, not daring to trust myself to that frightful idleness; and the request was one too frequently made by patients to strike her as at all singular. So she gave me the sewing, and I was busily occupied with it, crouched down in the corner where I usually sat, and while my fingers moved slowly down the seam, my heart was beseeching God to have mercy upon me, and show me the means of release from that terrible place.

"As I sat there, my nurse came out on to the piazza to take down some clothes that had been hung over the railing to dry. While she was occupied in that way another woman joined her, and they began to talk.

"I am going out for the afternoon," said the former, "just as soon as I put these clothes away."

"I want to go for half an hour," replied the other; "but I shan't get leave because I was out the day before yesterday."

"What do you want? Anything in particular?"

"Yes, indeed. I want to go and bid my sister good-by, she's going to start for the West before daylight."

"Where is she?"

"Only at my cousin Joe's, there on the turn of the Westlake road."

"Why 'tain't half a mile!"

"I know that; but they won't let me go."

"It's a shame, a body might as well be in jail as here," replied my nurse.

"Yes; and there's no knowing when I may see Sally agin—never, it's ten to one."

"Well, Betsey," replied the other, "I'll tell you what I'll do! You've done the right thing by me many a time, and I'll be obliging in my turn. I'm going right away, and I've got the key to the side gate, so that I can come back when I like; now I'll put the key—"

"Hush!" interrupted the other, pointing toward me. "Can't she hear you?"

"La, no! Look at her sewing away for dear life—she hasn't got the sense to understand if she did! I tell you, they'll all have to come round to my opinion in the end—she's going to be an idiot, and they might as well put her along with her kind first as last."

"It's a pity," replied the other, who seemed to have a few instincts of humanity left. "She's been here half her life, hain't she? I know it's ten years since I come, and she was here then."

"Never you mind, Betsey! She's been here long enough to show that she'll never have no more good of them poor brains of hers, and that's enough. I should think you'd rather settle how you can see your sister—"

"Mercy sakes, yes; but how?"

"When I go out, I'll lock the gate after me and stick the key in a hole there is between the wall and the gate-post, on the left-hand side and just below the upper hinge—the hole goes clear through—it's too small to put your hand in, but you can run a stick in and ketch hold of the key. Now, don't forget!"

"Indeed I won't, and I'm much obliged. If ever you want a thing of me, you've only got to ask."

"I know it. You're a good cretur, but kind o' weak with the patients, knockin' about does 'em good. Now remember, when you go out, shove the key back into the hole, and then we can get it from the outside."

"It's by the left-hand post just below the upper hinge?"

"That's the spot—you can't miss it. 'Tain't a place that can do any harm, for it's only a little mortar knocked out, and I don't suppose anybody's noticed it; I found it by accident, and it's so handy to stick the key in that I hain't said nothing."

"With those words, the woman took up the clothes and entered the house. Every syllable of their conversation was indelibly impressed upon my mind—I do not believe that even a return of insanity could efface them.

"I sat perfectly still. So great was the self-control I exercised, that I do not think my hand even trembled. I did not stir from the place for some time. I saw the nurse who had charge of me go down the yard toward the side gate.

I new the path perfectly well; it was an entrance not often used; to reach it you passed through the orchard, and the path was concealed from the house by a row of out-buildings.

"After a time, the other woman went sauntering down the yard. When I saw her disappear I crept up stairs. The woman Betsey was supposed to have charge during the absence of the other nurse, so I did not run much risk of being watched.

"I went into the room of my nurse, found a dark shawl, a straw bonnet, and a plain dress skirt. I took the bonnet in my hand, hid the shawl in the crown, and the skirt under my gown. Had any one observed me, no attention would have been paid, for I was accustomed to walk about the yard since my illness.

"In my turn I went down the path. When I was concealed by the buildings I put on the clothes I had taken. Had any of the keepers seen me, they would have supposed it one of the nurses and taken no further notice.

"I did not quicken my steps, walked quietly on through the orchard—the gate was in sight! I reached it, found the hole, and, picking up a stick, thrust it into the aperture. I could not feel the key!

"For an instant my brain reeled with agony—if the woman had thoughtlessly taken it with her! I tried again, and after a little search found where it was hidden and pulled it out.

"I unlocked the gate, opened it, passed through, locked it behind me, and restored the key to its hiding-place. From the instant that I breathed the free air without, a feeling of security came over me. I felt that God had heard my prayer—He would not allow me again to fall into the hands of my persecutors.

"I knew the road I wished to take, and my plans had been for some time arranged. I meant to go to the house of Dr. Wakeman, I knew that he would pity and assist me. It was a long walk—over thirty miles—I had to pass Redman's Run to reach it.

"I started, how I ever found strength to walk as I did I cannot tell, except it was that good spirits aided me that I might perform the work appointed.

"It was evening when I came in sight of the grounds about his—I mean Mr. Redman's place. I recollected everything at once—I had even a dim remembrance of the time I had gone there during one of my insane seasons. Except that one visit, I had not seen the spot for years, but it was familiar to me still.

"I knew there was great danger for me there, but I could not go on! I tried with all my

strength, but there was a power on my soul stronger than my newly-regained will, which bade me pause. I went a little way from the road, sat down in a secluded thicket and tried to reason with myself, but it was in vain: the feeling which impelled me to enter those grounds would not be appeased.

"After a time I rose, took the path through the woods, and came out by the stream which cuts between the hills at some distance back of the house. I do not know that there was any settled resolution in my mind. I felt that it was necessary for that man and myself to meet once more. I knew very well the danger which I ran, but I had no fear.

"The twilight had deepened into evening when I reached the Run. I hid myself among the bushes and there I waited, able to think, capable of forming distinct plans, but powerless to move away and seek a place of safety, sitting there so still, with my eyes fixed upon the roaring torrent, that had I been discovered, my actions would have been considered a certain proof of my insanity.

"The night was warm for the season of the year. I wrapped myself in the shawl I had taken from the asylum and scarcely felt any chill, although I was trembling at intervals with a vague sense of some approaching crisis which I had been brought to that spot to witness.

"Many hours must have passed, but nothing disturbed my solitude. The trees shook in the night wind, the brook moaned at my feet, but there was no other sound to break the stillness. At length, I remember thinking that it must be midnight—my watching had been idle. I made a violent effort and rose to my feet, saying aloud,

"This is only a lingering trace of madness; I have done wrong in giving way to it. If I do not continue my journey at once, I shall lose my reason again—I must go on."

"I took a step forward—a horrible apprehension passed over me—my very hair seemed to stand on end! I could not move an inch farther—had my pursuers been standing at arm's length I could not have stirred.

"While that terrible feeling was upon me, I heard a crackling among the underbrush, I looked up and saw Charles Redman standing upon the bank of the stream. He could not see me—I stood still and watched him.

"The moon had come up bright and full—there were hazy clouds, but every object was as distinctly visible as if it had been day.

"I wondered if I should have to speak with

him; if he discovered me I should assuredly be dragged back to my prison. I stood motionless, leaving my fate in the hands of God, too weak even to pray for help.

"For a few moments Mr. Redman walked slowly back and forth along the bank. He looked troubled and anxious, some subject full of pain evidently agitated him. I watched him with the feeling that a bird might have, fascinated by a rattlesnake, and as utterly incapable of forcing myself away from the spell of his influence.

"At length I heard another step upon the grass, and a man came out from the thicket and stood upon the bank of the stream. Mr. Redman did not hear his approach, and the man drew close to the path before he appeared to notice there was any one.

"When Mr. Redman saw him, he gave a start and put out his hand with a repellent gesture, and I could see his features work with anger and aversion. At that instant the man turned full toward the place where I was concealed—the moon burst out from between the clouds and cast its full light upon his face—I saw him distinctly as I see the persons in this room now, and his countenance was not to be forgotten, that of the young man who sits yonder guarded by the two officers."

At that instant there was a cry of agony from the bench where the witnesses were seated. Everybody turned with startled quickness toward the place.

I saw Prudence, half risen from her seat, her face ghastly white, and her arms extended with an imploring gesture.

"No, no!" she sobbed. "Don't say it, for God's sake, don't say it!"

They forced her down into her seat, and with another groan she crouched back, hiding her face in her shawl, and shaking from head to foot. The woman had scarcely looked at her, probably had not seen her face. She stood perfectly still until order was restored, then she made a movement to speak, and in a breath the same terrible stillness crept over the room.

"I saw that man," she went on, her voice taking a lower and more awe-stricken tone. "It is fearful to stand here and speak these words; but better that the guilty suffer than the innocent, whose safety depends upon the testimony that I give.

"For a few seconds neither Mr. Redman nor the other spoke. The young man turned toward him again with an insolent, defiant air, and Mr. Redman regarded him with the same look of scorn and suffering.

"What do you want?" he asked, at length, in a low, hard voice, although every word that he then spoke, and every syllable of the conversation which followed, was distinctly audible.

"Tell me what you want!" he repeated, when the other remained silent.

"I wish to speak with you," he replied, in a tone of forced calmness and indifference.

"You can have nothing to say to me now," answered Mr. Redman; "I wish to be alone tonight, have the goodness to go away."

"I shall not go away," he said, "and I will talk with you. I am not a child to be frightened by looks or harsh words."

"No," returned Mr. Redman, "you are a bad, hardened man, you were never a child! You have been false and wicked all your life—you have sunk lower and lower in vice, till now you stand there, a criminal!"

"Don't say that again!" he exclaimed, violently. "I will not hear it!"

"Is it not true?"

"I don't perceive anything so terrible in what I have done."

"Then you think it perfectly honorable to sign another man's name to a check? You do not consider it a crime to commit a forgery?"

"It was all your fault!" he broke out. "You would not give me any money, you drove me perfectly furious, and you may blame yourself for the consequences."

"I never shall! I blame myself for not having controlled you when you were young; but of this last act I am entirely innocent."

"I had to have the money or be disgraced—it was a debt of honor that had to be paid."

"And to meet it you plunged into this guilt."

"I gave you fair warning that I would do it."

"You did not! I believed you reckless, but I never dreamed you would be guilty of a crime."

"I do not consider it so; it was a very different thing. You are my nearest relative, you have brought me up to believe your fortune mine; I wanted the money, you refused it, I signed your name to the check. I do not see anything so fearful in it."

"When a man's conscience becomes so seared that he could sign his uncle's name, his next extremity would lead him to forge that of another man."

"You do not believe me capable of it!"

"I can't tell! You have disappointed me so—I can't trust you—there is not a principle of honor in your nature."

"You had the training of me," cried he,

trembling with a great fury; 'thank yourself for it—you are no better than I! What has your example been? What are you? A gambler, a libertine—don't talk to me, I won't hear it!'

"Mr. Redman clasped his hands above his head and groaned aloud,

"This is punishment enough," he muttered; "the whole catalogue of my sins does not deserve a more fearful retribution than this!"

"Will you tell me how you are going to settle it?" asked the other.

"I don't know how!"

"Well, it will have to be done."

"Do you still dare to address me in this insolent manner? Take care—take care! I have loved you deeply, borne much, but there is a limit to my forbearance. Heaven have mercy on you if you pass it, for from that moment you will have nothing to expect from me, I shall be your bitterest enemy, your sternest judge."

"Those words roused the young man to a pitch of rage that was more like the raving of the lunatics I had left than the anger of a sane person. He shook his clenched fists at Mr. Redman, and specks of foam flew from his mouth as he bawled,

"Do your worst; I'm not afraid! Turn against me if you will; but by the God above us you'll wish you had not! There never was criminal so reckless as I would be. I would torture your very life out!"

"This vaunting does not terrify me; you have tried it too often; it has ceased to have any effect."

"For you to upbraid me!" continued the other. "You are a fine specimen of a man to reproach me with anything that I may have done. Look back at your life! Do you think that its secrets have been kept from me? Why, I tell you, no matter how bad I may be, you are worse. If I were the vilest wretch that ever breathed, I should not be so degraded as you!"

"Whatever my faults may have been, I was never a monster of ingratitude. All your life long you have known nothing but kindness and love."

"I don't ask it! I don't thank you for it! You are great at promises, but the fulfillment is less. You swore I should marry Alice Morgan—"

"And your conduct disgusted her; she knew how vile you were."

"By this time the passion of the two men was terrible to witness. Never, never did the wildest ravings of my insanity picture a scene so terrible."

"I ask you one thing," exclaimed the younger: "will you settle this affair?"

"No!" said Mr. Redman; "no! Leave this place! I cast you off—disown you! Go to prison! to the gallows! I do not care; but from this moment hope nothing of me!"

"Be careful what you do—"

"Not a word—I will not bear it!"

"And you will not help me out of this trouble?"

"I will not!"

"What shall you do? It is not much I ask. Nobody but yourself dreams the check was forged. The bankers merely wrote you that they had paid the money according to your check."

"I do not care!"

"Again I ask, what will you do?"

"Cast you off, I say! If you trouble me I will prosecute you—send you to prison!"

"Is that your final answer?"

"It is—I swear it!"

"There was an instant's silence. I heard nothing but the labored breathing of the two men. Suddenly, before I could move or think, the young one sprang forward. I saw him clench Mr. Redman—saw a knife gleam in his hand. He gave two quick thrusts—there was a cry—a groan—and Redman fell heavily upon the ground."

"The young man flung down the knife and ran away. Before I could stir I saw that youth come bounding down the cliff, stoop over his uncle and try to raise him. Then I gathered up my strength and went toward him."

"He is dead!" I said.

"The youth did not appear to notice. Then I heard shouts and hurried footsteps. My only thought was of my own safety. If they saw me I should be lost, forced again to the asylum."

"I ran off through the woods, and left the young man leaning over the dead man. Once more started on my flight, I made no pause until I was miles away, and the morning had fairly broken. I stopped at a little farm house by the roadside and they gave me something to eat; but it was not the food that kept up my strength; it was the determination to escape which supported me; without that I must have sunk down hours before, and lain there until discovered."

"I reached Dr. Wakeman's house at length. He had believed me dead for years. There was only time to tell him enough of my history to enable him to recognize me, then my strength gave way completely."

"They carried me to bed and I lay there for

weeks; not delirious or insensible, but simply unable to move or speak. I was too powerless to reflect much upon the murder I had witnessed, and what power of thought I had was so entirely centred upon other things, that I never remembered the danger that might await the youth I had left alone with the corpse of his relative.

"The physician himself has told you that it was only yesterday I learned what had occurred; after that I have known neither peace nor rest till I reached this place.

"I have nothing more to say. I came here to reveal the innocence of that young man. I have succeeded—my task is done."

After the woman had ceased to speak, I think there was silence for many moments. I was leaning forward, with my head hidden in my hands, still unable to realize that I was saved.

I knew the judge rose. There was much commotion in the court. I saw the jury go out, return, and heard the foreman speak. Then the people began to leave the court-room. I beheld Maurice led away between the two officers. I caught the last look of impotent hate which he cast back upon me.

I know there was a little crowd about me. Prudence's arms were around my neck. Mr. Grant was holding my hand, Mr. Morgan talking breathlessly, and a number of familiar faces divided in expression, between joy at my release and horror of the fearful tale they had first heard.

I know we passed through a side door, and entered an apartment off the court-room. They were all talking to me at once; I was trying to answer and to understand. Suddenly the door opened, and the woman whose evidence saved me entered the room, still accompanied by her faithful friend.

When Prudence saw her she groaned aloud again, and strained me close to her heart; then pushed me back, and, pale as a corpse, tottered toward the stranger.

She caught the woman's hand in hers, and cried, in a sharp, unnatural voice,

"Do you know me? Do you?"

The woman turned her hollow eyes upon her, looked keenly in her face for a moment.

"Yes," she answered, in her cold voice; "you are Prudence Winship."

"And you!" almost shrieked Prudence; "who are you?"

"When I had a name they called me Lucy Mansford."

A look like that on Prudence's face I never saw on any other human countenance. She slid

slowly to her knees, her hands were raised, her eyes wandered from one to another, and words broke from her lips, harsh and struggling, as if pronounced without any effort of her own.

"Maurice Redman murdered his own father, and now his mother's evidence condemns him to death!"

We stood transfixed. In an instant the woman seized her in a vice-like clutch.

"He is my child," she whispered; "he is my child?"

"He is," again broke from Prudence's lips. She sank back upon the floor insensible.

There was a strange cry from the woman; then, before any one could stop her, she had darted through the door, and disappeared down the hall along which Maurice had been conveyed by the officers only a few moments before.

We raised Prudence, sprinkled her face with water, and she soon revived. Just as she opened her eyes the report of a pistol rang through the building. With a simultaneous impulse we all ran down the hall. The door of the room was open—an officer stood there, pale and horror-stricken.

I know they said some words—they tried to stop me—I pushed past and entered the room. Upon the floor lay Maurice covered with blood, a dark pool already staining the boards around. As I looked there was a slight quiver of the hands, a convulsive movement of his body; then all was still.

Upon the floor beside him crouched the woman—the miserable mother. Her long hair had fallen loose, and was dabbled with blood; her hands resting upon the forehead of the corpse.

At the cry which rose she turned her face toward us—the eyes were blazing and wild, but the old smile parted the white lips still.

"Hush!" she said, in a warning whisper; "hush! you will wake the child! He is fast asleep—don't wake him—don't wake him!"

A merciful Providence had saved her from ever knowing the truth; she was irrecoverably insane.

CHAPTER XVI.

It cannot be necessary for me to give many further details of that fearful season, or of my after life.

That very evening they took me away. With Prudence and Mr. Morgan I went directly to New York; a few hours after I left the prison I was holding Alice to my heart, and her mother was weeping over us both.

After that time two whole years were spent in Europe; Mr. Morgan's family and myself

traveled together, and old Prudence accompanied us.

At the expiration of those years Alice Morgan became my wife. There is little in tranquil happiness to record, as the story of our lives would possess slight interest. I went once to the house at Redman's Run—I dared trust no one to search my uncle's papers.

I found that all I had suspected was true—my father had placed money in his hands for my use, which he had appropriated to himself, and coined the story of my father's shame to silence my inquiries.

Freely I pardoned that—to me the first error appeared a thing easily forgiven, the after crime was only the natural consequence of the fault.

From Prudence I learned the particulars of Lucy Mansford's life.

She had been married, when young, to a friend of my uncle's; they were all in Europe together.

By some means the poor creature was enticed from her husband, and came in secret with my uncle to America. The exact truth Prudence never knew, but she proved that a dark mystery was hidden under the guilt—that the girl was innocent, and had been led by plots and force to accept her shame.

At all events, he took her to Redman's Run a half-crazed wreck, and entrusted her to Prudence's care. Maurice Redman was born in that house.

She grew constantly worse after the birth of her boy, and was at last sent to an asylum, where she dragged out twenty-five more years of her miserable life.

Prudence had long believed her dead, and all her former friends shared the delusion. The story of her disgrace had been hushed up. The exact truth was never suspected except by Prudence; the rest of the world had believed her guilty, condemned her; and though my uncle was readily pardoned, as a man always is in such cases, her memory was covered with obloquy and contempt.

She was never again returned to the asylum; we found her a refuge where she was well cared for, and during the remainder of her life her insanity was of a different kind. She was quiet and happy, believing always that she had her child with her, and retaining no recollection of her past trials, or of the terrible tragedy which had been the consummation.

The house at Redman's Run was torn down—I could not bear to leave that monument of guilt and misery standing. The estate passed into other hands; and, with the fortune which I found at my disposal, I made for my wife and myself a home far distant from everything that could remind us of the life gone by.

My tale is done.

The erring father and son sleep side by side near the place where the former met his death. Let us forbear to judge either. When the day comes that all secrets are laid bare, we cannot tell how many extenuating circumstances there may have been for each; but with saddened hearts let us, prayerfully and trustfully, leave all in the hands of Him whose judgment is not as the judgment of man.

SUNSHINE.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

It was a rare thing to see a shutter wide open on the dwelling of Mrs. Campion. If the phenomenon were observed at all, it was quite early in the morning. She had a great aversion to sunlight, and never allowed it to come in, even through the smallest crevice, if the means of exclusion were within her reach. Nearly every room in her house had, even at noonday, a twilight dimness. She lived in shadow; and, it might almost be said, in silence also. The house of Mrs. Campion was one of those quiet, shaded places that impress you like a wooded valley. Were there no children in her home, that it was so still and free from sunshine? Yes, Mrs. Campion had two children, pale, proper little beings, who were not given to loud words or rude behavior like others of their kind. John never stamped through the hall, nor went down stairs three steps at a time, nor hallooed to his sister from the first to the third story—oh, no! John was guiltless of all such juvenile improprieties. And as for Clara, she was, and had been from the time she could walk, a miniature lady.

Such, in brief, was the home of Mrs. Campion and her children. What of Mr. Campion? Oh! He passed, two or three years ago, from one house of silence to another. He had been known as a genial, cheerful man; but, long before he passed to that other silent house, a change had come over him. In the beginning of his married life, Mr. Campion, on returning home at meal times, or other occasions, would throw open the shutters, as most men do, and let in the light. But, instantly, his wife would close them, saying,

"How can you do so, Henry?"

Or, "Oh! dear! You'll blind me!"

Or, she would complain of the "dreadful glare," or the danger of fading carpets and curtains.

For awhile, Mr. Campion went on opening the blinds and letting in the sunshine that was so pleasant to him; but Mrs. Campion had more will and persistence than her husband, and as this fancy for having her house in shadow was not a thing of indifference, she did not give up her point. If he opened the shutters, she instantly closed them; sometimes using fretful

words; sometimes only making a few impatient gestures; and sometimes restoring her beloved twilight without a remark, or sign of feeling. Remonstrance on his part had no effect. She listened to no reasons. She was mistress in her own home, and would order it as she pleased.

Mr. Campion was a kind, peace-loving man; and after discovering that his wife was "set" in her purpose to curtain their home with gloom, gave up the struggle for sunlight, and sat down in the shadows of perpetual evening. But, he was like a bird, and could not sing in the night. So he grew silent; and the cheerfulness went out of him—silent and moody at times; and the moodiness often went over into positive ill-nature.

Mrs. Campion felt the change, and being now and then hurt by her husband's ill-nature, wept for the pain she suffered.

In the beginning, evening was the brightest season in their home, the shadow-dispersing gas lamps flooding their sitting-room with rays, that to Mr. Campion brought memories of sunshine. But Mrs. Campion soon grew weary of this "fierce glare," as she called it, and substituted them for a soft astral moonlight.

"I'll sit in another room," said Mr. Campion, when he saw the high, shaded lamp of old time on the table in their cosy sitting-room, which, because of its strong evening light, had become to him the most cheerful place in the house.

Mrs. Campion smiled in her placid way, and answered, in her usually dead level tone,

"How absurd! This soft astral is far more pleasant than sharp, blinding gas."

"For owls and bats, it may be," answered Mr. Campion, with some impatience of tone. He felt disturbed and uncomfortable. The introduction of this astral lamp, without notice or consultation, made it plainly evident that the cheerful gas light had been finally banished from the room.

"You are complimentary," said Mrs. Campion.

"I didn't mean to be so," he returned, icily, and rising, left the apartment. Going into the parlor, he lit three of the burners there, and sat in the clear, strong light with which they filled the room, reading and alone, until bed time.

On the next evening, the astral lamp was lighted again, and again Mr. Campion sat alone in the parlor.

"I am sorry you will do so," said Mrs. Campion, as they met, at bed time, in their chamber. She spoke evenly, yet with the tone of one who felt slightly hurt by conduct of which there was good reason to complain. "I can't endure that glitter and quiver of gas light. It seems to stun my sense of vision. I should grow blind if I had to endure its perpetual glare."

"It is because you live all day, like a night bird, in twilight dimness," answered Mr. Campion. "Your very eyes are losing their native power."

"No, that is only an assumption. It stands to reason that all intense light must hurt the eyes. It so hurts mine, and I would be wrong not to protect them."

Mr. Campion was not a strong, stern, self-willed man. There was a spirit of acquiescence about him; a desire to accommodate himself to others, instead of forcing others to bend to his wishes or peculiarities. So, in this case, he was the one to give way. The argument of his wife, that the glitter and glare of the quivering gas hurt her vision, overcame his sudden flurry of opposition, and on the third evening he sat down in the soft astral moonlight.

From that time, Mr. Campion seemed to lose the old facility for smiling. Once, almost every word came forth with an attendant smile. Now his even voice rarely touched a note of joy; now from his parting lips rarely went over his face a rippling sign of pleasant feeling. He seemed to give up the hope of getting back again into the sunshine that he loved. To hear the prison doors shut heavily on his spirit; barring out the blessed light.

In less than two years afterward, Mr. Campion died. He was not, as we have said, a strong, self-willed, self-reliant man; but kind, good, and yielding. Yet he had certain needs of the soul, which could not go unsatisfied, without the foundations of life being touched. One of these was the need of cheerful surroundings. He was fond of the bright and beautiful in nature; and grew sombre and restless with deep yearnings when they were withdrawn. We do not say that it was in consequence of living in a home so shadowed, that Mr. Campion drooped like a plant from which nutrition and sunshine have been taken, and at last died. But, we think, if he had found more cheerfulness and sunlight there, the life forces would longer have kept their even beat.

The shadow of death was now upon the household, in addition to the previous gloom, and in this deeper shadow Mrs. Campion lived with her two children. No wonder they grew up quiet, pale, soft-treading, proper things—model children in the eyes of some mothers who were daily stunned with the noisy, vigorous life around them. But they were not healthy children. How could they be?

An old school friend, who had removed to a distant city shortly after her marriage, and with whom Mrs. Campion had regularly corresponded, came to pay her a long promised visit. It was two or three years after the death of her husband.

"I really can't see you in this darkened room," said the friend, on meeting Mrs. Campion. "Let in the light."

Mrs. Campion merely drew one of the heavy curtains that hung before the window, a little aside.

"I can't see you yet, Clara dear. Let in more light. Open the shutter."

But Mrs. Campion only looped back the curtain a little farther.

"It won't do," said the other, in a decided way. And, going to the window, she threw back the shutters widely.

"Ah, now your face is clear!" And she grasped warmly both Mrs. Campion's hands, and looked at her with a long, earnest, tender look.

"How changed you are, Clara! I should hardly have known you."

"You are changed but little," replied Mrs. Campion. "Your eyes are as full of light, and your countenance almost as fresh as when I last saw you. Time has dealt kindly with you, Mary—kinder than he has with me."

And Mrs. Campion's quiet voice grew sad. Then she turned to the window and drew in the shutters, shadowing the room again.

"No—no; don't do that," said the friend, quickly. "I can't see you; and your face is too precious to my eyes. I will not have it veiled after this fashion. Open the shutters."

Just a crack was made, giving only an intimation of light.

"Farther than that, Clara—farther—farther still!" As Mrs. Campion pressed against the shutter, and moved them as slowly as the hand of a clock. "Why, bless me, dear! You really seem to be afraid of light; one of God's best gifts, and free for all as air and water. I don't wonder that you are pale and faded if you live in a twilight such as this. Push the shutters wide open! There; that is the way."

Mrs. Campion's eyes blinked, and the lids contracted nervously under the stimulant of the light which now filled the room. But she had to bear the annoyance in deference to a visitor and friend, who, truth to say, did not, at the moment, appear half so agreeable as in the olden time when they were sportive girls together.

"And now, where are your children, Clara?" asked the friend, after they had talked awhile, her loud voice affrighting the echoes of the room from a sleep in which they had long been bound. "You have written me so freely about them, that I feel almost as much interest in them as in my own."

Mrs. Campion arose at this, saying, "They are at their lessons. I will bring them."

But, before leaving the room, she went, as by instinct, to the open window, and bowed the shutters. Mary did not object, but the moment Mrs. Campion left the room, she threw the shutters back and fastened them in place, saying to herself,

"I can't live in a dungeon like this!"

In a little while, the mother came in with her two children; but there was such a strong light in the room that all of them showed a nervous contraction of the eyelids.

"These are my jewels, Mary," said Mrs. Campion, as she presented John and Clara.

Her friend took their shadowy-looking hands, gazed into their pale faces, and kissed their pure brows and delicate lips. She thought rather of some exquisite artist-work, than of flesh and blood children, as she looked at them.

"They are delicate, you see, as I often wrote you," said Mrs. Campion, when the children left the room.

"As are all things grown in the shade," was the answer.

"What do you mean by that, Mary?"

"Just what I say. Anybody, with half an eye, can tell a plant that has grown up, tall, slender, and blanched in the shade; or, a human being who has half-developed under the same unfavorable circumstances. Your children are house-plants, reared in darkened rooms, Clara; and I do not wonder to see them pale and puny, nor to hear you complain of their delicate health."

Mrs. Campion arose, and, going to the window commenced closing the shutters. The light was annoying her; and, forgetting, for the moment, that her friend had asked to have its companionship, she was about to exclude it again.

"Pray don't, Clara!" exclaimed Mary. "Why, I do believe you are a monomaniac on the sub-

ject of light. What do you think the sun was made for?"

"Not to blind us with its glare, certainly," answered Mrs. Campion.

"And it will not, unless we look, foolishly, into its bright face. No, it was not made to blind us with its glare, but as the medium of all good in nature: light, warmth, health, beauty. It is the soul of nature. Shut out its blessed beams, and you rob yourself of God's best gift to the outer world. If I could so arrange it, I would let the sun look, for an hour each day, with his broad, smiling face, right down into every room in my house, as the best sanitary dispensation possible to adopt. His bright rays would drink up every sluggish, damp exhalation that might be lurking there to do a work of evil—they would purify the air, and make it more fit to do its office in the lungs—they would give an atmosphere of cheerfulness to last through all the live-long day. Do you keep every room in your house as this was a little while ago, Clara?"

"Yes; I cannot bear strong lights."

"I don't wonder that your husband died, then, if it was so in his life-time," said the friend, in her free, out-spoken way.

Mrs. Campion slightly started, and looked a little strangely at her friend.

"Why do you say that?" she asked.

"Oh! I only said it. Men like plenty of sunshine. They cannot live without it. They grow, for the most part, you know, out, as it were in the open fields, and they acquire the habit of using a great deal of sunlight. Take it from them, and they grow moody, morose, or sick. I know. I've seen it. Don't men always throw open the shutters when they come into a darkened room. They cannot breathe in the close, dusky atmosphere."

Mrs. Campion looked down at the floor in a thoughtful way. She remembered how her husband plead for more light in their dwelling, and how she had rigidly denied him even a gleam of sunshine. And he did change, in a few years, from a cheerful, pleasant man, to a silent, gloomy, and ill-natured one. She sighed at the reminiscence.

"What quiet children yours are!" said Mary, referring to John and Clara, an hour or two after she had seen them. "I haven't heard a sound of voice or footstep since they were here. No one would know that there was a child in the house."

"They are good, quiet, orderly children," replied Mrs. Campion.

"Getting ready for heaven as fast as possible,

"I doubt not," was answered, a little impatiently.

"Mary!" There was a tone of reproof in the voice of Mrs. Campion.

"Just as I say. Getting ready for heaven. Of course they are not long for this world."

"Mary!" The tone of reproof was deeper.

"You mustn't be offended, Clara," said the other; "I'm a plain-spoken woman, as I was always, to your knowledge, a plain-spoken girl. Outright and downright is my motto. Now, I've got pretty sharp eyes, and I've seen enough since I've been here to make one thing as plain to me as daylight. Do you wish to know what that is?"

"Say on."

"There is one green hillock in your graveyard; and there will be two more before many years, if you don't take care. Children can't grow up, sunless and motionless, and live beyond a brief season. In some rough assault of the elements, from which you will find it impossible to guard them, the balance of feebly equipoised health will be lost, and they will wither and die in a day. I warn you of this; and may the warning not come too late. Open the windows of your house. Let in the sunshine. It will send new life leaping along the veins of your children; give activity and consequent vigor to their limbs, and restore to them the gift of sonorous speech, that wonderful expander of the lungs. Children, and no noise in a house! No wild company, gay laughter, nor shouting! Why, these are the very sounds of healthy growth and development, Clara! What strange infatuation has come over you? Don't be offended with me for this plain talk. It is a true friend speaking to a beloved friend, and for her good. Reason must, and does, tell you that I am right."

Just then John came, with his noiseless step, into the room.

"Mother," said he, "my head feels bad again."

"Then you must have some medicine." And Mrs. Campion arose. As she did so, her friend laid a hand upon her arm, and said,

"Medicine?"

"Yes. The doctor left a draught for him to take whenever he has this strange, heavy feeling in his head of which he now complains."

"Give him a draught of sunshine; but no doctor's stuff to break down the little vitality he has left," replied the friend, in her positive way. "Come, let me see the room in which the children play and study; or, maybe, they never play."

And rising, she drew her arm in that of Mrs. Campion, and pressed her toward the door.

"Dim and sunless, like every other room I have seen," said she, on looking at the bowed shutters and curtained windows of the children's special apartment. "Now I'll stake my life on it that mould will be found somewhere creeping along the walls. I can smell it in the close air, and it is poison to the lungs."

She pushed open all the shutters, and looped back all the curtains, letting in a flood of light. Then, going to a corner of the room farthest from the windows, she laid her hand on the wall, and said, instantly,

"Damp, as I supposed! And just look here, Clara. Don't you see these spots of mould? Here is one as large as a dollar; and this is almost as broad as your hand. And see! half this breadth of paper is loosened from the wall, and actually wet! As you value the precious lives of your children, don't let them breathe the air of this room again, until it has drank, for days, its fill of sunshine."

Mrs. Campion looked surprised, and even startled. It was only too true. The walls were damp in places, and spots of mould were discolored the paper.

"A damp, close, mouldy air for the lungs of delicate children like these!" said the friend, almost indignantly. "It is little less than murder to expose them so. Don't be hurt with me! Don't be offended! I can't help speaking out plainly. It is a case of life and death, and I could not be conscience-free and remain silent."

Nobody had ever made so bold as to talk after this fashion to Mrs. Campion; though there were plenty of her visiting friends who spoke among themselves of her children as plants growing up in the shade, and not likely to reach maturity; and of her house as one of the gloomiest places they had ever seen.

"You exaggerate the matter," said Mrs. Campion, in a perplexed way.

"Not in the smallest iota, Clara, dear!" was answered. "Your children are pale, puny, and sick for lack of sunshine. Let it come in through every window. Take down your curtains and swing open the shutters. There is life, health, vigor, and beauty all around your home, seeking every day for an entrance, but you bar them out. Take John into a lighted and well aired room, and, my word for it, in less than an hour that strange feeling about his head will be gone."

"You think so?"

"I do. Try it. The remedy is simple; and

cheaper and safer than doctor's stuff. Try it, Clara."

Mrs. Campion felt excited and anxious. The language of her friend had both startled and alarmed her.

"I will," she answered.

So the shutters of one of the chambers were swung back, the curtains drawn, and a window opened to let in the soft air that was warmer than the temperature of the room. Just one narrow gleam of golden sunshine found its way in and lay smiling upon the carpet.

In this room the two friends sat down, and the children were told to remain and occupy themselves as they pleased.

"Does your head still feel badly?" asked Mrs. Campion.

"Yes," replied John, in a quiet, patient way.

Mrs. Campion and her friend began talking about old times, and the children were left to themselves. At first the broad light was scarcely less pleasant to them than to their mother, but this was only for a little while. The friend noticed that they were soon attracted by the patch of sunshine on the floor, and that they sat down beside it, and pleased themselves by holding up their hands and looking at the light through their half-transparent fingers. It was a novelty for them to see the stranger sunbeams inside their dwelling. Soon they began to talk sportively to each other across the sheet of rays in which motes were dancing; and anon, their voices broke out in little ripples of laughter. Mrs. Campion looked toward them in surprise. It was such a new thing to hear them laugh.

"How is your head, John?" she asked.

The boy, called back from a state of pleasurable excitement, looked up at his mother with a questioning air, as if he did not clearly understand her.

"Does your head feel any better?"

John put his hands to his head; shook it once or twice; looked thoughtful for a moment, and then replied,

"My head feels all right, mother."

"I knew it would be so," said the friend, in a whisper, bending toward Mrs. Campion. "Sunshine is all they want. Give it to them, Clara, in unstinted measure. They cannot live without it."

Mrs. Campion did not answer; but the incident was making its impression. For the rest of that day, the children were permitted to enjoy this lighted room, and, before night, they actually grew noisy in the expression of their hilarious feelings.

"Why, what an appetite you have, John!" said Mrs. Campion, at tea time, as the boy asked for a second biscuit—he rarely eat more than half of one.

"I'm right down hungry!" was his smiling answer.

Now that smile on John's face was a novelty, and Mrs. Campion saw it with a feeling of pleasure such as she had not felt for a long time, a very long time.

"There is great virtue in sunshine," said her friend, in a low tone.

"I believe it, Mary," was the answer.

"It is to the body what love is to the soul. Take both away, and there can be neither health nor happiness."

Mrs. Campion went on, from that time, to prove the truth of her friend's theory. The banished light streamed back, once more, into her dwelling.

With its return, came health of body and mind to both herself and children. She believes in sunshine now as much as she once believed in twilight shadows.

THE FAMINE TIME.

BY MEHITABLE HOLYOKE.

NELLY—do you not know her? All Nellies are alike in one sense, and in another delightfully unlike all things else on earth.

Can you think of a Nelly who is ill-bred, one-sided, her perseverance obstinacy, her energy wasted in kicking against the pricks of life, and striving to drag things after her, whether they run in their proper grooves or not?

No. Nelly sets wheel in groove, and the car rolls of itself; she stoops, and with delicate fingers picks out the pricklers, one by one, in such a sweet, childish way, that presently you, husband, brother, who set them there for a trial, are on your own knees picking to save her the pains!

Nelly—you meet her under all circumstances, in all lands; it is as if some soul, too full of grace and genius for earth, had been parted, quicksilver-like, and scattered far and wide; yet each portion unchanged in its nature, holding still the graces of the whole.

And she doth guess this dimly. When looking in the eyes of some stranger, you recognize the Nelly of old, how wistfully she gazes back in yours, as who should say, "Give tidings of my scattered being, give hope that it yet shall meet and be once more united." Ah! Nelly, doubtless it will!

It is charming to see the transformations through which this spirit passes and changes not. I left her in July by the sea-shore, in the July time of her beauty, a gipsy, tall and stately as a palm, with dark blue eyes, with thick, dark, curly hair. Yesterday, here at the mountains, I met her again, a slender blonde, with gentle eyes, and few fair curls, active, noiseless, delicate as light.

This Nelly had come from the Emerald Isle, as she loved to say—rolling the r's—and a long illness, from which she was not yet recovered, had made her feel that, perhaps, she was journeying on to greener islands in the Eternal Sea. In more than the ordinary sense she was,

"A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveler between life and death;"

therefore common, daily existence to her, as it might be to us all, was more vivid than any drama, more deep and sweet than any romance.

We were strangers. But had I not always

known her? Else why did I watch with such interest as she worked a corpulent kitten in worsted, on a sofa pillow, sewing in beads for the eyes, and for dew on the flowers about plump Grimalkin, and dropping words the while that were gentler than dew, and brighter than strings of crystal beads? Ah, me! I was thinking, how, while we creep to a corner and plan romances, some beings are all romance, from the threads of their golden hair to the tip of their dainty slippers!

Nelly is somewhat clairvoyant: letting the worsted kitten fall, and folding the little thin hands on the bright-hued silken border of her sea-green poplin dress, she said suddenly, "What are you looking after in my eyes?"

So I told my thought; and she answered,

"But I seldom read a novel, and could not compose one for my life; all the romance and tragedy I know is true, oh! awfully true! You that dream over fancied sorrows know nothing of such."

"Instruct us then, will you? We know well enough that these griefs and mysteries we make are only shadows of the real: teach us better!"

She sprang to her feet, thrusting pussy, worsteds, beads, and all on the sofa. "Come! let us walk down toward the lake, it is too lovely a morning to waste in the house: and how can one talk beneath a wooden roof?" this as we shawled and veiled ourselves.

The perfect summer morning, and the beautiful prospect silenced us at first. On every side stood the watching hills, bathed in sunlight, or folded in purple shadow from the clouds; beneath us the lake lay, all wreathed about with summer woods, and shining brightly as it mirrored back the sky.

"How peaceful it is over there!" I said, pointing where, past the village, the mountains stood calm in a sunny haze. "We are too young to feel it fully; how the aged must rejoice in the look of tranquil strength and unearthly repose! Now see the velvet shadows!"

So Nelly awoke to speech. "Yes, the cloud-shadows move over Graylock, and the sky wears this sweet blue, the lake sparkles in beauty, and the flowers blossom round our feet; it is so every year, so this minute, and yet think!—this

very minute the world is whirling on with its deep, terrible, heart-rending sorrows—does Nature care? Or do we care much who walk here tranquilly under the tranquil hills, admiring the graceful shadows that hover over Graylock? I'm thinking of shadows that hover over human hearts, and are never lifted, that settle down on whole generations and neighborhoods—and the sky just as sunny, and just such gentle shadows flitting over the hills!"

Being used to moralize, I said, "Nature would make the trouble worse by frowning at our woe, or raining her tears day and night: it is her sweet way of consoling, to hint at a tranquil and unchanging life, and point beyond this little stormy sea of Time, to those eternal shores where the lashing of strong waves shall be forgotten."

"Nay, I do not believe in making light of realities: trouble is everything to us while it lasts. But you do not know the meaning of that word in America. I could tell plain, unvarnished tales, that would seem too exaggerated to write out for romances; besides being, perhaps, too homely and awfully real to please such as have peace and plenty all about them, and can afford to stand and watch the cloud-shadows creep over Graylock!"

"Tell then, and let me judge: they must be deep miseries which make you bitter against Nature herself." Nelly bitter! I should as soon have expected her worsted kitten to rise up and scratch me; but the exception often proves the rule.

"Well, you see I went through a terrible experience before leaving home. It was the famine time in Ireland; you have heard of it, for Americans sent us out relief—God knows we needed it! People were dying about me by hundreds, starving to death, fevered, and no one to bring a drop of water, naked, shivering, and I had not the garments to cover them! It took all the money we could get for medicines, and for coffins, and shrouds. Rich and poor alike were dying; and our warm-hearted peasantry seemed changed to other beings by their griefs, their sympathies, and instincts all reversed. You look disturbed, maybe you'd rather sit here by the lake and dream over the beauty of Graylock! but I cannot; once waded into the deeps of existence, and you never emerge again, I believe; human life becomes so thrillingly real, and earnest, and you feel, with all your race, the distant and the near!"

"Go on then: into the deeps I follow you."

"I never can realize but the poor are human like ourselves: hunger, and cold, and disappointment, and loss, are as hard for them to

bear—as tears come in their eyes, and the color leaves their cheeks, and the courage leaves their souls just as it may leave ours. Ah! and to see them, people I knew so well, and remembered as fine rosy girls, and brave young men, languishing there by the roadsides."

"By the roadsides!"

"Yes, when the fever was at its height, and there were none to attend the dying, and go from house to house for the dead, there was nothing left but to collect the sufferers together where they might attract the notice of passers by, and so gain a good office now and then—a coin, or a cup of cold water. We had pits dug along the roadsides, in the warm sand, and placed the sick there, side by side; and you wouldn't believe how it agreed with them! It was airy, and clean, and the sky had a cheerful look overhead; and the famine and misery had opened all hearts, so that they had from strangers as much help as they really needed.

"There's a deal of character and of romance about our Irish peasantry, though you'd hardly believe it from some of the specimens that come to this country: many lose their wits on the voyage, I believe. There's a mixture of poetry and superstition in their minds, of faith, and short-sightedness; they are so charmingly improvident! no cold calculations, but straight into the midst of what they want, and then—there's time enough to calculate!

"Human! They have quite as delicate feelings as ours; they will starve for love, and die for disgust. I have witnessed it."

"I do believe you are coming to the romance."

"I was proving to you that all life is one, *me deare!* How can I tell my story to American ears? you look on our peasants as poor, wooden-headed worms, I'm afraid. Not quite?"

"Not at all, let me assure you."

"We have, at home, many marriages of convenience arranged at ale houses, between the parents of the betrothed, merely to renew an old friendship, or unite two estates: and, likely as not, break two hearts in attempting it."

"Do hearts break?"

"Yes! Think of being forced to marry a man you have never seen, or never wish to see twice, an old man, or an ugly one, or ill-tempered and intemperate, merely to please two millers at a tavern, or join two bits of land!

"You would not? Everything depends upon custom, *me deare*, and there's the habit of submission, and influence of the priest.

"But you would die first? So some of our poor people feel; human alike, you see! I

remember a farmer's daughter, who was a near neighbor of mine, and a friend also—she was young and lovely, and far too refined for her position—and a rich old widower set his eye on her, and wove one of those ale-house webs till he had her betrothed to him; and she hated the sight of his face, and, what was worse, loved another.

"The true lover, of course, was, poor as he was, winning and generous; and the girl had grown up obedient and religious, so all she could think of was to throw herself at the priest's feet, and beg him to save her from the evil fate. I saw it myself—saw her beg and entreat her parents first, and then fall down and put her arms around the old man, and look up, with her sweet face all tears, entreating to be released. He would not be moved more than to smile a little pityingly, and tell her 'twas only a foolish fancy she had; that the bridegroom was rich, and good, and she would soon become accustomed to him.

"So they were married—my blood boiled to witness it, though I was only a child—and ten months afterward that old priest stood beside her again, for the blooming girl was dying of mere disappointment and disgust. She had done nothing but pine from the wedding day, and now here was the end; and I was glad for her in my soul. The husband, a good man enough in his way, looked on, and wept, and wondered; and the parents wondered, as they wailed, how she should die and leave so good a home, and the estates so well joined. But the priest understood; the woe and remorse in his face, as he bent over her, told me how well he knew that it was his work—the blighted life and the early death! So the old man learned a solemn lesson, else he had never feigned as he did in the story to which this, *me deare*, is only a prelude.

"There was another ale-house match arranged, between a good-looking girl and a man disagreeable enough, if there had not stood in his way a fine young lover, without one fault except his poverty; and, if that were a fault, a very sinful man he was, for he hardly owned the clothes on him, and in truth they needed patching.

"Ellen Flannigan might have been more or less religious than my own Mary that died; she felt it a sin to sell herself for money, and told the priest so, when she went, as the custom is, to confess, before her marriage. 'Why!' he asked, 'what will you do? Are not your own guests waiting in my kitchen to witness the ceremony?'

"'Yes, your reverence, and there's some one waiting outside the window here—a boy I love as truly as I detest that Mike Connaught—long may they wait before I marry him!'

"'And what then?' said the priest.

"'Then for the sake of love, and honesty, and the gratitude that's all we can give, if your reverence will have pity—'

"'Tush, girl!' said Father Carroll, 'do you suppose I'll make myself unpopular in the parish, and disappoint all these people, and lose you a good husband just for a whim? Go along to the kitchen, and when I have read this chapter I will come and marry you, maybe!' and the fun twinkled in his eyes through the tear.

"Ellen Flannigan fell at his feet, kissed them, and went out quickly from the confessional, leaped from the entry window close by, and joined her own lover.

"When half an hour more had passed, Father Carroll went to the kitchen, and exclaimed, in great indignation, 'Is this the way my time is to be wasted? Where is the bride? And why have not you called me?'

"'Troth that's what we wanted to ask your reverence, only we dared not intrude,' said one, and the parents began to fret, and the deserted lover turned pale, for he saw how all would be likely to end.

"The friends started off in pursuit, by which they gained nothing; for they went by the shortest path to the next parish, and the lovers, having cautiously taken a circuitous route, did not reach it till after their pursuers had returned home. The priest, being used to such affairs, asked no questions, but married the two, and they went forth from his house.

"And they might as well have turned one way as another, for they had not a place to call home, nor a farthing to spend, nor a friend to give them aid or work. The night was coming on, and Ellen in her white gown, and the flowers and bits of finery she had decked herself with for the wedding; and Barney in his clothes that needed patching, two young things!"

"How improvident!"

"Ah! it was so delightfully Irish! They wandered on, looking at the stars, and discoursing of the fine way they'd keep house if they had one to keep, when it occurred to Barney Moore—they were Mr. and Mrs. Barney Moore now—that he had an old aunt living alone in the woods somewhere, and maybe she'd give them a shelter.

"So they traveled on till they came to her poor hut, roofed with turf. The aunt was angry because they awoke her at night, and more

indignant still when she heard the cause; till it came out that the rival lover was a Connaught, and she had a hatred for all his clan; so her mood changed, and she gave a true Irish welcome to the best of all she had—her one room, and her one bed, and her poor, starved table.

"From this time the three relatives lived together; and though ere long the number increased, the husband and wife worked so faithfully that they brought the old aunt many comforts in her home. As for the children, they just took care of themselves; they paddled in the soft bog mud, and built castles of sticks and stones, and grew very fat and healthy. The cabin was enlarged, and dignified with windows, and, one by one, there came pigs, hens, geese, a cow; and at last the earnings amounted to sufficient for the purchase of a donkey, that, with Barney to work him, was very much in demand in the neighborhood, and his services well paid. So now the family might be considered in prosperous circumstances.

"And now came the famine time. The aunt was stricken with the fever first, and Ellen came to me for medicine—this was the first I knew of her—and next she asked medicine for her husband, too; and then food for them all, since in his sickness, the donkey stood idle, and their means of support was taken away; and next she wanted a coffin and shroud for the old aunt—ah! at that dreadful time—these requirements followed each other so rapidly, were such sure precursors of each other!

"Could I administer to the sick? Oh! yes, I was on the relief committee, and the physician had given me such general instructions as he could, and supplied me with remedies for the most prevalent diseases. With my scales and phials I measured doses like an apothecary: and how I doled out meal and clothes, and preached economy to the poor, sick, starving things!" and Nelly looked down at the silken border of her poplin dress. "You would scarcely believe how far a little money went, and how precious a little was in those terrible times! We had everything systematized, the districts divided into wards, and in each of these we made statistics of the sickness, want, and ability to work, and received from the general supply in proportion, and gave as we could from this.

"Ellen Moore came again on a fine morning like this, when cloud-shadows were moving over our hill-sides, as gently as these over Graylock now; there was not a tear in her eye. 'Would I give her an order for Barney's coffin and shroud? and, if I pleased, would I obtain leave

for her to work the donkey, as she was all alone, with four children to support, and not a dust of meal, and the cow drying up?' Her eyes were bright and hard as steel, but not one tear in them, as she took the order and went home.

"I obtained the desired permission, and she went forth, day by day, to work with the donkey, earning thus four and sixpence a week, which is more than your dollar, and a goodly sum it was then. But one day Ellen came for medicine again, the eldest child was ill, and then for the shroud and coffin; and then another child, and another was taken down. It was fearful to see the regularity and the calm despair with which she came on these bitter errands; not a tear, not a word of complaint, but—'a coffin for little Barney, if I pleased,' or 'some drops for little Meg,' that was named for the good old aunt.

"At length only the baby was left; and this clings closest to a mother's heart, you know—the most precious because the feeblest, and the baby now was her all; so I trembled when, from my window, I saw Ellen once more approaching the house. In any other woman I should have felt reassured by the firm step, and the erectness of her attitude; but that in Ellen might only be indicative of despair.

"And thus I found it. Hastening to meet her, I reached the head of the broad stairway, and never shall I forget the picture, as she stood there at the foot, in her old red cloak, her tall figure dilated, and arm upraised, and tearless face, and the light of the window pouring full upon her, her customary meekness gone, and her patience quite gone.

"Ah! the poor baby!" I thought, and was wondering could I afford it a coffin; for so fearfully had the deaths increased, that in some districts it was customary now to make one coffin serve for many in turn, using it only as a bier.

"I was aroused by her stern voice, 'I have come to ask you what I have done? Tell me what I have done that God Almighty should treat me thus!' I thought to myself, 'The baby is gone.'

"There was not a tear nor quiver of the lip—she appealed to me as if I stood in the place of Providence. 'What have I done, that last night the donkey should fall into a fit and die? and the rest of us may as well follow, for there's our last hope of bread.'

"If ever a donkey committed suicide it was that one, for he had eaten only hard straw for three months. It was vain attempting to comfort Ellen; she went away, and came again in a softened mood to ask food for the baby,

medicine, a shroud; and then the cabin was locked; and she resolved to cross the sea, and hide her sorrows in America.

"I thought this an unwise plan, and offered to take her into my own service; but she would not listen; and we parted, hardly expecting to see each others' faces again.

"Little did I dream that this new world would become my own home; yet it was so ordained; and walking in the street, one day, whom should I meet but my old acquaintance Ellen Moore.

"Slim, and wrinkled, and brown she was, much changed since she had wandered through the woods in her white gown, with Barney, that summer night; changed even since she had

buried the six that made her little cabin a home, and had locked the cabin door.

"But true to her first love, a lonely woman still, she was toiling and saving, in order to return and have masses performed for her dead; and to thatch the old cabin, and have it look like home once more—their home.

"I did not reveal to her that the land was sold, the cabin was torn down, and a new house stood on its site; there was no need to interfere with her pious purposes, for I saw too plainly she would pass by a nearer way, to that home where no storms beat off the thatch, and where she would be taught—poor heart!—why 'God Almighty' had ruined all her hopes below."

THE HARSH LOOK.

BY MARY A. DENISON.

"MAGGIE, Maggie, how could you?"

"Why? what have I done but look at the child?"

"But, Maggie, you looked at her *so* harshly!"

"Well, and if I did—is she too good to be looked at?"

"Oh! but Maggie, she is an orphan."

Maggie Lilburn tossed her head lightly, affecting disdain at her sister's trembling lips, but, nevertheless, the words and the tearful glance sunk into her heart.

In a chamber, richly furnished, two little beds stood side by side. Both were daintily shaped—furnished with soft linen and delicate netting like lace. Refinement floated in the air above them—hung in every fold of drapery about them—touched the rare adornings of the room—laid in each dimple of the rounded cheeks—in each careless curl of hair, threading its golden way over the pillow.

There were two of them—two darling little girls, one in each soft bed; but one was ruddy and healthy, the other pale and more slightly formed. They slept the beautiful sleep of infancy; but, beneath the lashes of one were traces of tears, and the infantile lips curved downward slightly, as with grief.

It was very silent there; and, in the silence, soon a step sounded. Mary Lilburn, a gentle, graceful creature, came softly in, and, pausing, looked at the children. She kissed the brow of the rosiest slumberer; but over the other folded her hands, as if with a benediction, and gazed with a long, yearning glance.

"Poor little darling!" she murmured, at last: "how can any one speak harshly, or give one cold glance to so gentle a child! Poor little orphan! God bless you!" and she bent over and kissed her lips, lingering long on the fair face they pressed, and then she went to her own room.

She had scarcely gone before another step sounded along the chamber; and Maggie, the young, healthful, happy mother, came forward. As she stood there, a shade of regret stole over her beautiful face, and she sighed, "I suppose I haven't got the patience I ought to have with her, poor orphan!" but she kissed neither of the children.

It was the dead of night, and Maggie Lilburn, worshiped wife, happy mother, tossed restlessly upon her luxuriant couch. She had not yet slept. A little figure, looking mournfully out of dark eyes, haunted her. Occasionally she heard a short, quick sob coming from the dim corner in which were outlined the beds of the two sweet children. At last the great clock of the city struck twelve, and Maggie had found the boon her nature craved—she slept. Slept, but not in peace—not in quiet. Her head turned uneasily, her hands moved, the lips quivered, and sobbing sighs and tears attested a troubled dream.

Still deepened the quiet gloom, and larger grew the shadows in the chamber. The babes were moved away; footsteps and whispering voices disturbed the silence. A sombre man, dressed in black, bent over the bed whereon lay Maggie Lilburn. A gentleman, much younger, stood further back, giving passionate way to some strong grief. He was half hidden by the pale blue hangings of the bed. Mary, pale as marble—her beautiful white face an awful sternness in its anguish: the result of strife for self-composure—knelt, clasping one hand of the sufferer in her own. A servant crouched in the distance, hiding her face, and weeping in silence. On the bed lay Maggie, the young wife and mother, no longer restless, but white, faint, and still. Her blue eyes wistfully wandered from face to face; and the lips, so beautiful in repose, were distorted in her vain efforts to speak. At last the eyes closed, the lips were still. She slept, lightly, gently; it was, alas! the sleep that precedes death.

"She will be able to speak when she awakes," whispered the doctor.

His words were true. The dying mother awoke with renewed strength—a sudden meteoric brilliancy that flashed the premonition of dissolution.

"Husband! Mary!" she said, slowly; her eyes wandered from them and her white lips murmured, "My child! my little Maggie!"

They brought the little girl, who wept because her mother was so pale.

"This is the bitterest cup!" said the dying woman. "Oh! Mary—oh! my husband, how can

I leave Maggie? Oh! this hard world—this cold, cruel world—how can I leave Maggie?"

"She shall be as my own," whispered Mary, the tears raining down her cheeks; "she shall be loved as you would love her; cared for as tenderly. God will give me strength and patience." Her voice failed her, she could only weep.

Quietly lay the mother—her life ebbing out—a troubled expression gathering, and deepening upon her face. Again she essayed to speak. She turned her dim eyes toward her sister; her lips were quivering; the last tears drained from the fount of life, as she said, with a touching manner of self-rebuke, and so solemnly,

"Mary, you won't look harshly at my poor orphan?"

"God helping me, never!" cried Mary. Her voice seemed to ring with supernatural distinctness through the chamber.

The dying woman struggled fearfully, and—
awoke!

Springing up in her bed, she clasped her hands together in an ecstasy of joy. The gray dawn crept through the shutters, paling the light of the dim lamp.

"Living! living!" she cried, "my child is not motherless! And oh! my heavenly Father, help me to profit by the vision Thou hast sent. Aid me to remember at all times, that she Thou hast entrusted to my care is motherless. That just as I have, the being who gave her birth, longed for her happiness, wept for her, prayed for her. Never, never will I forget. Thou who art the God of the fatherless, aid me in doing my duty by my sister's orphan child."

Stepping softly to the crib, she lightly kissed the brow of the motherless little one. The child awoke, and flung its arms round her neck, and in that silent embrace, Maggie asked God again to aid her, that she might know no difference between her babe and the little charge He had given in her protection.

"THE HEAVY WEIGHT."

BY CATHARINE R. PROCTOR.

CHAPTER I.

It has rained and snowed over her; the winds of winter and the breezes of summer have rustled the boughs above her; the birds have sung, and the bees hummed around, and she has not known it—she has not heard; yet she loved them all. Her heart beat as warmly, and thrilled as buoyantly at sight of sky, or tree, or flower, as do the hearts of birds, and her voice could outlive them. She could sing like a meadow-lark when it springs aloft to the summer heaven, or purely as a bobolink, dropping into the dewy grass from excess of rapture. She rests; everything beautiful and life-loving must rest in the same wakeless, silent sleep. While she was here my life was serene, peaceful; since she has gone it has been embittered, hurried, and almost frenzied; thank God she escaped!

I am sitting by my sister's grave. The sun is going down, red and rayless, in the smoky, November sky. The air is mild; and brown, stiff leaves fall from the dark limbs interlaced above my head and rustle over the dried grass. I am not sorrowful, only oppressively tranquil and undisturbed; this mood with me is more unusual than one of excited grief or joy. I am accustomed to being swayed to and fro by every outward influence, as well as by inner passions and impulses, and seldom know the relief, or rather pressure, of serenity. Old memories are thronging in upon me, they banish every present interest, every petty, selfish thought. I am face to face with my dead joys and griefs; they are resurrectionized, and crowd upon me in vast troops, as grim and weird as the army of scarred veterans and brave young soldiers that assembled at the "Midnight Review of Napoleon," of which the German poet tells us.

Things which in childhood gave me happiness now cause me acute pain, because they are ir retrievable, vanished forever. Things that then gave me sorrow now seem trivial, and as mere shadows in comparison to the tangible, dark griefs that have since beset me.

The mound is grass-grown; the stone gray; the sleeper underneath, I know, peaceful. Little without me seems changed since she died, but all, all is changed within!

Will you listen, dear reader, while I tell you the story?

Philip Washburne was our nearest neighbor's son. He spent his vacations at home while in college. I had always known him—never quite liked him, for as a boy he was grave, stern, and studious, and there was consequently distance and restraint between us. I was careless, impetuous, and unstudious, and after he had gone to college, he always called me Miss Margaret—never Madge, Midget, Puss, or any of my many endearing diminutives—and I was incensed at it.

He once brought a friend, Henry Seaman, with him to spend the summer holidays. I will pass by first acquaintanceship, the picnic parties, fishing excursions, horseback rides, and other amusements with which we beguiled the long days, and tell the main events of my story briefly.

Fanny and I sat in our cool parlor one afternoon, both silent. There were numerous vases of flowers in the room that filled it with odor. Fanny was leaning her cheek on one hand and listlessly twisting a curl with the other. I was dreaming—pondering on the influence a certain pair of eyes had on my pulses and nerves; on the electric thrills and blushes, accompanied with diffidence and embarrassment, that came over me whenever I felt the glances of the dark orbs, laughing but steady, turned to my face. I was thinking of the voice; of the broad shouldered, erect figure; of the closely-curling hair like grape-vine rings; of the careless ringing laugh.

A step entered the hall; I knew whose it was, for I expected it, and stood up waiting. A slight tap at the parlor door, and he entered. No! it was not Henry, but Philip. Fanny, who had remained seated, rose quickly. He saluted us gracefully and gravely, and said, "My friend Henry told me he had made an engagement to practice a new ballad with you this afternoon, and wished me to say he would be unable to do so, as he met with an accident this morning."

"How?" I said, not quietly, but eagerly.

"Oh! he is not injured; he was fishing, and the boat being unsteady and unlike the one he usually takes, he was upset, and became entangled in some fishing tackle; it was with difficulty that he extricated himself, and, as the sun was shining very hot, he was quite exhausted.

He had a serious headache, and begged me to excuse him until another day."

"But you sing?" said Fanny, softly.

"Yes; I am not considered a musical prodigy, however."

"It was Margaret who was to sing: will you try?"

"If she wishes; but, Miss Margaret, I forewarn you of a trial of your patience. I do not know your temper: are you hasty? I dread incurring your disapprobation."

He laughed, and I blushed; incensed, yet not wholly wroth, that it was not Henry.

We did tolerably well together, but as he said, he was not a wonderful singer. We sang the ballad only once.

"Please, Philip, sing that little boat song you sang, the other evening, as we were rowing on the lake."

"What, Fanny, to piano music?—that needs the rippling of water and the dip of oars; it needs moonlight and a lady's voice in the chorus."

She came to the piano, and saying she could trust to our vivid imaginations for the moonlight, played a soft gurgle of notes, and Philip smiling began. It was admirable, and Fanny chimed in with the free, bold, bass in clear, gentle tones when he reached the chorus.

"Bravo! Fanny, *mia*, you excel——" I thought he was about to say my name; but after a brief hesitation, he said, "in music, I believe."

He began turning over some music and talking meanwhile. His ease and simplicity quite removed, for the time, my awe of him, which I had always termed dislike. He staid until evening, and, after expressing a wish that he might be permitted to see us often at our home, left us.

The next day I walked to the river for water-lilies. I was used to long rambles alone, and enjoyed them. It was exceedingly hot, and I rested a long time on the bank. Before I was aware a thunder-cloud darkened the sky and rose rapidly. I had a horror of thunder-showers; I was timid, even to childishness, whenever it lightened. I hurried, with my bonnet off, to the road, looking every few moments at the portentous sky. A carriage was coming close behind me, but I did not know whose it was.

"Miss Margaret, I can carry you home much quicker than you can walk. You will surely get wet if you undertake that long mile across the fields; will you ride?"

"Yea," I said, laughing "gladly." He reached his hand and I sprang in. It was more than three miles home by way of the road. I felt sheltered

in a covered carriage with the storm at my back. The horse was shy and startled at the bright flashes of lightning. I had my bonnet in my hand, and Philip looked at me, seemingly amused, for I was so excited that I talked and laughed rapidly.

A low, red gleam, quickly followed by a crash, brought the horse to a dead stop, just as we were opposite the little church; then with a sudden, terrified leap he sprang forward, and I saw Philip was using his whole strength to control him. He was intractable from fright, and threw up his head with his nostrils and eyes widely distended. With an energetic effort, Philip succeeded in reining him up under the shed, built for a shelter to teams during church service. "Margaret, we shall have to stop here," he said, "for Robespierre is vicious, and if curbed when frightened kicks destructively. The shower, I think, will soon be over; we will go into the porch which is a sheltered place."

He lifted me out and said, "Run, so as not to get wet!" I did, and he disengaged the horse from the carriage and tied him to a post. He then joined me, but great, prelude drops had begun to patter, and he was glistening with wet; he shook his bare head and laughed.

I was almost torpid from terror. He remarked my paleness, and said he had thought me a very Spartan for courage. In my fear I forgot everything; as the rain began to pour in rushing torrents, and the flash and roar became incessant, I buried my face in my hands. Once I looked up, and Philip stood with folded arms and awed and serious face, gazing calmly out upon the white, wild masses of rain, the swaying and writhing trees, the black, illuminated sky.

The wind shifted and occasionally drove the rain on us; he stood between me and the wet.

A long, dazzling flood of light, with the loudest, nearest report I ever heard—a boom like a thousand combined cannon—made me start; in my terror I had been almost immovable. I heard a shrill, terrified neigh, and then a quick clattering of hoofs as Robespierre rushed frantically down the road.

"Margaret, don't be so nervous and alarmed!" and he put both arms round me, and I hid my head on his breast. He was justified in shielding me so, for I should have fled, like Robespierre in desperation, and perhaps he saw in my face my mortal alarm. I could feel the quick, though steady beating of his heart; I had no thought of impropriety; I crept closely to him and was calmed. Gradually the lightning grew less frequent, and though the rain had abated, it had by no means ceased. I looked up at him,

and could not help smiling at the concern with which he regarded me.

"You are all wet, Philip."

"A little wet, Margaret; don't move or you will no longer keep dry." Though his arms still encircled me, I no longer hid my face.

"What shall we do, Philip? Robespierre has gone, and the rain does not stop, how can we get home?"

"Wait until the rain does stop; but really, Margaret, I don't know how you will get along unless I carry you; you are farther from home than when I so magnanimously offered you a ride. Have you quite got over your fear?"

"Yes, indeed." Just then, as if to show my childish, unaccountable weakness, another terrible bolt stunned me. Down went my head again, and his arms held me closely. He waited until some moments had elapsed, and then laughing bent close to me and said,

"Ah! you imperious, independent women are the very ones that need closest shielding! Two hours ago, Margaret, and you would have scorned to touch even the tips of my fingers; now I hold you unresistingly." There was no arrogance in the tone, but I tried to free myself. All my habitual obstinacy and freezing indifference to him, or his wishes, stung me, and I made an energetic attempt to loosen his arms; I would not be reliant a moment on his protection; but no; he was strong as a giant, and I could not unlock one tithe of his hold.

"Hush, Margaret; you know I tell the truth. Listen!"

I would not listen; I was exasperated and blindly angry. At once he undid his arms; I had not expected release without a struggle, and I looked involuntarily in his face; never, never had I seen it so pale, and his eyes were on me fixedly. I underwent a quick revulsion of feeling, and, instead of a defiant spirit encountering opposition, mine was an awed one, shocked at the submission of its ruler. I would have given anything to have been sheltered by him—dependent on him—rather than have him stand so before me; rather than have stood myself, awed and trembling before the magnetism of his steady eyes. A motion to recall me, even to his arms, I would have obeyed to have escaped the awful sense of seeming independence, when I was really in absolute and unresisting submission.

The rain was still falling fast, but gentler, and the sun was half coming out. There was a splashing of hoofs and wheels in the road, and a buggy came on in front of the church. Philip turned and hailed the driver, who was

none other than Henry Seaman. "Well done, renegades!" he laughed. "Robespierre came dashing home—Miss Margaret was missing, (I knew all the time it was a concerted plot,) and I am a foraging party appointed to bring in what I can find; who will ride?" Philip turned, with a motion of his hand, toward me, and, without looking at me, said, "Miss Margaret."

"Yes, Washburne, you are wet, and need violent exercise to keep you from taking cold. Walk home the two miles after your horse, and then come back for your buggy, and, as a person of considerable medical experience and great reliability, I will promise you shall have nothing worse than the whooping-cough. Good-by!"

While he was talking, Philip was helping me in, and we drove off without a word from him. "Margaret, you are pale as a willow in a mist; has Philip been telling you ghost stories—talking psychology, or scaring you with Greek?"

"Henry, you know that I am so afraid of lightning that it drives me distracted; please do hurry home!"

He suspected the lightning was not wholly to blame, and, laughing, declared the road was exceedingly bad, and that it was dreadful work for a small horse to draw a carriage and two people. He studied my face until I was aware of the greatest confusion. Finally he became serious. "You seem averse to talking, Margaret: when may I see you to have a long conversation? I have much to say to you."

"Any time but now!" I said; and he left me at the gate without another word, and with a pressure of my hand.

I found Fanny in a fearful state of excitement concerning Philip, as she had seen Robespierre go by, and in some alarm about myself. I quieted her and related all the adventure, only omitting the scene in the church porch. The next day I was unable, from the effects of my excitement, to see either Philip or Henry, though both called to inquire for me.

CHAPTER II.

FANNY, who was usually very well, was stricken with a fever which was prevalent, and caused from malarious exhalations in the atmosphere. I watched and tended her through two long weeks of suffering and delirium. Her fair, sweet face grew sunken; her lips parched; and her eyes wild and glassy; but the most painful thing to me was listening to the words she uttered unconsciously.

She was of a timid, reserved nature, and never confided, even to me, her deepest feelings; but now she bared her heart, and I read the start-

ling and unthought-of story of her love—her wild, devoted, idolizing love for Philip Washburne. I could not tell from her fragmentary and delirious words whether he knew of it, but I inferred from the hopeful tone and the absence of all distrust, that he had sought and won her heart. She never raved like a despairing, discarded worshiper; but her intense and vehement prayers to him, to let her see him and not to miss the hold of her hand, lest she sank in the darkness she felt over her eyes and around her heart, were all trusting prayers. Our mother had been dead for years, and I was her chief watcher. Every day Philip came to ask for her, and every day I thought he grew paler. Only once he spoke to me of myself. "Margaret, you will kill yourself; for my sake have some mercy on yourself!"

"For your sake," I said, "I will bring her back to life and will *not* spare myself!" He looked vacant and sorrowful, but did not say another word.

She died with his name on her lips!

I was sisterless, alone in the great house. The summer vacation was nearly done. I sat down one chilly, rainy afternoon in the parlor. Before me was a sheet, closely written, in a fine, bold hand, full of the most passionate declarations of love—of the wildest, tenderest words of affection. It was signed, "Henry." I wrote in reply only a few words; there was none of the warmth and eagerness in them that made his whole letter glow, but I accepted him.

The night was wild and stormy; the shutters shook, and the rain beat in torrents. I was sitting with my face in my hands in a vague, listless stupor; not thinking, but suffering. Before I was aware of the opening of a door, steps crossed the room and stopped before me. I looked up; it was Philip. His hair was wet and tossed back from the palest face, the most fiercely burning eyes I ever saw; his arms were folded as usual when he was excited; he looked fully at me, and said slowly, in a low voice,

"Margaret, you have broken my heart!"

I could only listen to him, I could not answer, as he went on rapidly telling me tenderly, then fiercely, that I *knew* he loved me, questioning me, and then, on his knees before me, telling

me sternly not to lie to him, but swear whether or not I *loved* Henry Seaman! I left my hands passively in his iron pressure; I was too stricken to struggle; the cry of my heart was, in anguish, too late! too late! but my lips were dumb!

"Margaret, Margaret! you love *me*!" he sprang up exultingly and was going—"he shall know it—he shall know it!"

Then the thought came to me lightning-like, clear, bright, that but a few weeks ago my dead sister, Fanny, had listened to words of love from those same lips; he was not true; he was not honorable! "Philip, you dare not do it!" I almost shrieked, as I caught his arm. He turned my face to the light. "You are false—fickle, a traitor! you loved Fanny; she is not six weeks dead, and yet is forgotten! Go!"

"Margaret, listen! listen!"

"Go!" I said—"go!"

He pleaded, "Margaret, Margaret, listen!" I drew away from him, "I am Henry Seaman's promised wife; an angel from heaven could not make me break that promise, much less you, Philip! Will you leave me?"

"Never! I did not love Fanny—I never spoke one word of love to her; let her name rest! You, Margaret, are the only woman I ever held close to my heart—the only woman I ever loved! I will not leave you!"

I saw my peril, for he was strong of will, and could control me as a magnet can a needle. My plighted love was a fabrication; I had no love to give to Henry; and the promise rose between me and my life's happiness like a shadow of death. Had Philip been calm I should have yielded, nor attempted to be true to my troth, but he was a very tiger, and I could not free myself from his gaze. He read me clearly; he knew my heart, but I left him before he could intercept me, and I never saw him again!

Reader, you know now why, though I am a worldly woman, with every worldly blessing, I bear a heavy weight which burdens me more than years. You can see now the shadow that darkens every light—the wound that, though hidden, prostrates me with unrest. I leave my city home often to stay near this grave, and the sad, holy feelings this quietude awakens have kept me, thank God, from evil.

THE HOUSEHOLD MARTYR.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

Mrs. RICHINGS was one of the most perfect specimens of the race of martyrs that it is possible to imagine. The early Christians living in catacombs, and perishing by all manner of tortures, were nothing in comparison; Saint Laurence smiling on his gridiron fell far short of her: and, as for the lesser lights, they disappeared completely when their claims were set up in juxtaposition to those of Mrs. Richings.

Yet no one would ever have thought that she had any special necessity to cultivate martyrdom, had she not asserted her claims so loudly there was no possibility of believing that she could be deceived. She brought something more than talent to her aid—it required positive genius to have reached the rank that she had attained, and she wore her thorns with so much grace, betraying her sufferings by such a patient, heart-broken smile, that to watch her was quite a study.

She had been an elder daughter, and one after another of the younger olive branches had dropped off to flourish into trees on their own account: but the fair Amelia lingered. Why, it would have been hard to say, for she had been rather a pretty girl, although of the die-away order. She had ruled her father—not with a rod of iron, oh! no—with the martyr's sceptre, which is more potent by far.

Her sisters were ungrateful creatures, after all the care she told of having bestowed upon them, for they laughed at her behind her back, and called her by a variety of names, which would have looked very badly written in her baptismal register. Yet they all stood in awe of her; it was not her scolding which they dreaded, any one of them was her match in that—but her martyr-sigh—her injured look—the saint-like forbearance with which she appealed to her father—her very composure forming such a contrast to their rage, that it alone would have gained the victory.

So Amelia ruled them while she remained at home. It was strange too with what difficulty those girls found husbands. Lovers they had in abundance, but Amelia was very prudent; she inquired so closely into the antecedents of the suitor, that her father would take the alarm, the cavalier be dismissed, and Miss Caroline, or

Miss Eleanor, as the case might be, left to recover her spirits as best she could. It all sprang from Amelia's interest in them—yet they were not grateful.

"I know they are not," she would say, with tears in her eyes, "but I am supported by the consciousness of having done my duty; one day they will thank me for it."

She was a woman full of sympathies and instincts; she recognized a bad spirit immediately by a peculiar shiver, no matter how charming might be the mortal shape in which it was wrapped. Such a nose as she had! Externally it was ordinary enough, a little too long, perhaps, but its power of detecting odors was beyond belief. She could tell when Eleanor's beau had been drinking before he got fairly into the hall; she would sniff until her father asked what was the matter, and she was forced, in spite of the pain it gave her, to tell him the truth.

She smelt out the novels that the girls hid away for Sunday reading—she scented their love letters, no matter how deep the drawer in which they might be secreted—she recognized the odor of cigars on their mantillas, when they came in from a walk, where they had no business to meet gentlemen: in short, she tormented them to the utmost extent, as was her duty, and wore her martyr-smile all the time.

Finally Eleanor made a secret marriage—at least she supposed it was such—but not an hour after the ceremony, her father was informed of it by Amelia, and turned his daughter out-of-doors in consequence—the martyr standing by dissolved in tears.

The other sisters did somewhat better; but at last, luckily for those who were growing up, Amelia had an admirer on her own account.

Mr. Richings was a widower, with an only daughter, a pretty child of twelve, and, beside that household attraction, he possessed a comfortable income. He detected in Amelia a resemblance to the "dear departed"—no widower ever made love to a woman that he did not see in her some likeness to his lost Clarissa!

He wooed and won the interesting Amelia, and bore her away to grace his own domicile. The bevy of married sisters never ceased to congratulate the younger ones upon the escape

they had had; and somehow before Amelia had been gone three months, the willful Eleanor was restored to her father's favor.

The martyr prophesied that the whole family would go to ruin when her tender care was removed, but they seemed to get along after a fashion; and their father was occasionally astonished at the harmony which had prevailed among his flock since Eleanor had returned home. But she, silly girl, was no martyr, she did not know how to bear the honor of attending to the house, and leave somebody else to do the work—she spoiled her little sisters, petted her brothers: altogether there was a change.

But we have nothing farther to do with the quiet household, so let us follow Amelia as by far the most important person in the family.

Mr. Richings looked forward to a vast deal of happiness, for, since the death of his wife, his house had been lonely enough, and he felt that his little daughter needed more care than he knew how to give her.

Little Marian was delighted with her new mother; Maria was pleased with her house, charmed to find herself at the head of an establishment, so they trod on velvet for a time.

But the martyr could not be quiet long. The first blow she felt called upon to receive was given by the portrait of the first wife. It had been sent away to have the frame repaired, and was not returned until several weeks after her marriage. Mr. Richings naturally ordered it hung in the place it had always occupied, over the back parlor mantle.

Amelia stood by him while he superintended the operation. The servants left the room—Mr. Richings turned and addressed his wife.

She neither saw nor heard—she had sunk into a chair, and was gazing at the pleasant face which looked so kindly down upon her. Gradually the patient smile settled over Amelia's face; the eyelids drooped with a weight of unshed tears; her look and attitude were full of uncomplaining misery.

"My dear!" Mr. Richings said, in alarm.

She sighed, but did not move.

"Are you ill?" he asked.

Resignation and distress struggled together upon her face. She seemed swallowing sobs that nearly choked her, and it was some time before she found voice to reply.

"Not at all—do not notice me! I shall be better soon."

At last the secret came out. She felt as if the portrait watched and upbraided her—she should never be to her dear husband what that woman had been!

Of course when vows and expostulations were of no avail, Mr. Richings proposed having the picture removed, but to that the martyr would by no means consent. The portrait was left, and, during the years which followed, there was never a day that it was not made a subject of torment to the husband.

Did Mr. Richings venture to disagree with her in opinion, she looked despairingly at the likeness of the former Mrs. Richings and sighed. If company were present, she struck an attitude of such intense suffering before it, that they secretly decided her husband must be a fearful brute. She talked at it—she wept in front of it—she sighed under it—she made it the prominent thorn in her martyr's wreath, and pricked herself with it for all the world to see.

The servants in the house were displaced—the furniture was altered—always at her desire, yet in every change she found a subject of distress. Once completed, it had been done at her husband's instigation, she had seen that he wished it, although he had not spoken! She knew that the contrast between his past and present life was painful; he wanted to remove every object that could, in any way, remind him of the happiness of former years.

Then she dropped a few tears into her embroidered handkerchief, gazed despairingly at the portrait, and arranged the wreath so as to make its thorns more apparent.

Once settled in her new home, she took Miss Marian in hand—she determined to take charge of the child's education herself. Now the girl was an affectionate, high-spirited little creature, quite heart-broken at a harsh word, and really needing more encouragement and sympathy than children in general.

Mrs. Richings fitted up a chamber next her own for a school room—lined it with black boards—established there a stately book-case, filled with all sorts of overpowering volumes—procured globes, philosophical apparatus, and had everything on as complete a scale as if she had been going to fit several stout, growing boys for college.

Poor Marian was frightened half to death the very first time she entered the apartment. She knew how to read and write, could spell tolerably well, had learned her French alphabet, and read any quantity of stories.

Mrs. Richings examined her in her most critical style; and, when she had concluded, shook her head in such a melancholy way, that Marian was fully impressed with the idea that she must be the most ignorant and abandoned little wretch in existence.

But her new mother was very kind—she was satisfied to see how completely the child was crushed. She delivered a beautiful discourse, worthy of a lecture room; and Mr. Richings, entering before the close, was puzzled and struck with great admiration—not being able to make head or tail of the speech, made it seem still more wonderful. He was more fully impressed than ever with the belief that his wife was a remarkable woman; while Marian stood in the middle of the room, where her mother had stationed her, not daring to stir for her life, and as much edified as if the lady had discoursed Sanscrit for her benefit.

The next day the teaching began in earnest. Marian's time was measured by rule, and each moment had its particular occupation. The child was crammed, lectured, sighed at, wept over, until she was fairly dizzy, and began to wonder nobody had ever told her what an unnatural monster she was.

There was a high stool of penance, a dunce cap, a small ferule—before the first week was over, Marian had essayed each in turn. She was not scolded—Mrs. Richings was no vulgar step-mother! She pleaded with the child, she told her what sacrifices she was daily making, she shed rivers of tears, and heaved tempests of sighs.

The mother of Mr. Richings' first wife was living in the same city, and came often to visit them. She was a charming old lady, deeply attached to her grandchild, and quite prepared to like her son-in-law's new wife for his sake.

Amelia was gentleness itself. But never any human being saw the two together, that he did not decide that the elder female had done the younger some great wrong, which she endured with the most Christian forbearance.

One day, when the lessons had been in force about two weeks, Mrs. Gray went to the house when Amelia was occupied with her daughter in the school room. Feeling that she might take the liberty, the lady went up stairs and entered the chamber unannounced.

Marian was seated on the high stool in the centre of the room, studying her French verbs; and Amelia was glancing reproachfully at her from over a book that looked marvelously like a novel. She rose to receive her guest in a very injured manner.

"I thought I might run up stairs," said Mrs. Gray, apologetically.

"I never receive visitors in this room," Amelia replied, in a plaintive tone; "but, of course, you have the right to come, if you please"—the

word "have" emphasized so as to make it equivalent to *take*.

"I should be sorry to intrude, my dear——"

"I have no secrets," Amelia said. "Did you think I had? Oh! believe me, my dearest wish is to make my husband happy."

"My dear friend, I never doubted it!"

"I know the prejudice against step-mothers," she went on, wiping away a tear; "but I mean to do my duty! I think Marian loves me; I wish her to, for she is *his* child. May I say mine, too? May I?"

She extended her hands, and looked so imploringly at Mrs. Gray, that the old lady was quite confused.

"I am glad you feel so," she said, "it is pleasant to meet a woman who knows so well her duty."

"I understand," sighed Amelia; "you cannot love me—it is natural!"

Mrs. Gray expostulated; the martyr attitude came in play at once. The visitor scarcely knew what to answer, and she turned to Marian, who had not dared stir from her seat.

"Well, my little pet, won't you speak to grandma?"

"I beg, I entreat," said Amelia, while Marian shook her head mournfully, and hid her tears among her French verbs. "This is her hour of silence. May I beg you not to interrupt it?"

"Her what?" returned the old lady, facing her with her keen, gray eyes.

"You will object, I have no doubt, but I think it well to discipline children; from three to four Marian is not allowed to speak."

Mrs. Gray said never a word. She had too much sense to do it before the child: besides, she had determined not in any way to interfere.

"You object—you disapprove!" cried Amelia. "You will think me a monster—a child that I love as my own life! Oh! yes, of course, I am wrong! Speak, little Marian—call me a monster, too."

She wept so tragically that the child was quite frightened, and cried aloud. Mrs. Gray looked from one to the other in utter bewilderment.

"My dear Amelia," she said, "I have never thought of blaming you, believe me. I will not intrude upon your school hours, it cannot be pleasant for you. Come and see me to-morrow. Good-bye."

She kissed Marian and went away, trying to put aside the unpleasant thoughts that would creep into her mind.

When she was gone Amelia dried her tears, leaving a trace about the eyelids for her hus-

band's benefit. Marian had her face buried in her apron, and was still sobbing away from a vague sense of wretchedness."

"Marian," said her step-mother, "dry your eyes; this is the hour for silence, not for tears. By way of punishment, go and stand in the corner, and hold this book at arm's length until I give you leave to move."

Of course the child obeyed. If anybody thinks the penance a slight one, let him try it for twenty minutes or so!

The pleasant torture was over at last. Mr. Richings came home, saw the tear-stains, received the impression that his mother-in-law was a jealous, fault-finding old woman, and blamed his daughter in consequence.

Mrs. Richings told her step-daughter daily how grateful and happy she ought to be, and the child tried very hard, but could only reach a stage where she felt deeply her own turpitude without knowing how to remedy it.

By the time she had been blessed with her new parent for about a year and a half, nobody would have recognized the child. She had grown a pale, timid, little thing, fully impressed with the idea that she was a pocket edition of original sin, and her mother, an angel of mercy, sent to reclaim her from perdition.

She had her day school and her Sunday-school. On common occasions, Mrs. Richings taught the ordinary branches of education; and on the Lord's day she poured down the child's throat such a flood of orthodox belief, utter depravity, eternal suffering, brimstone lakes, and legion-hearted imps, that the little girl was afraid of her own shadow.

Some way, Mr. Richings had gained the idea that Marian was a child who needed constant watching—secretive and very difficult to understand. The girl felt that she was blamed, and that made her more timid: so, on the whole, though she might possess a model step-mother, the little sinner's life was by no means a paradise.

At last, Mrs. Gray found a way of aiding her. She did not venture to plead for the child, but she declared that Amelia's health was failing, she needed relaxation, Marian must be sent to school.

Mr. Richings agreed at once, and, though the martyr wept piteously, she consented, very glad in secret, for she had long been heartily tired of the whole affair. Marian was terrified half to death. If her parents thought her so bad, what would strangers think? But Mrs. Gray encouraged her, fairly out-manoeuvred the martyr, and had Marian sent to the school of a lady

who had known her mother well, and would love the child for her sake.

Amelia devoted herself still more to society, by way of having a little relaxation after such close confinement with her darling child. Her husband did not interfere with her peculiar tastes; for the least opposition brought on such an attack of tears, sighs, and mute reproaches, that he was glad, as any wise man would have been, to let her alone.

Amelia was a consistent church-goer, very strict in her ideas of female propriety, and she weeded her circle again and again. It was astonishing how much she found that was wrong in women who had never been blamed. Not that she boldly announced her doubts, that was never her way; but she could express more by a smile than common mortals in an avalanche of words; ruin a reputation by lifting her eye-brows, more effectually than a thousand horrible stories from ordinary lips would have done.

Few ladies liked Amelia; but among gentlemen she was really a favorite. She talked well, listened admirably, appealed to their judgment in such a pretty way, that they were charmed; to say nothing of the hold she gained over the wisest by artful flatteries, which only a woman knows exactly how and where to administer. Into the bargain, they pitied her; and when a man begins to sympathize with a woman it is all up with him! Though Richings seemed a pleasant man, it was so evident that something lay below; for, of course, in the presence of her visitors Amelia did the martyr in her most excruciating style.

Strangers were treated to the subdued smile, the trembling voice, the sudden relapses into thought after moments of gaiety; then, as they became better acquainted, followed the by-play before the portrait; then the little shiver at her husband's entrance, the implicit obedience, the abject slavishness which it was apparent was wearing away her very life.

Amelia liked the society of intellectual men; poets and philosophers were always to be found at her reunions; and, as she gave them delicious little suppers, besides flattering their vanity, of course they adored her.

So the years passed on, and Amelia acquired the position she had always desired—she was considered a remarkable woman, and a great patroness of art and literature.

All that Mr. Richings liked well enough, and he was very fond of his wife; but, nevertheless, he was often exceedingly uncomfortable, without knowing why—the martyr tormented him

so adroitly that he was always convinced that it was himself who was to blame.

Marian returned home at intervals, but was always glad to get back to school. She felt quite guilty, but still she could not love her step-mother. She was growing a tall girl, and it was not pleasant to be treated so much like a child, nor agreeable to be forced to cling to her "pig tails" and short dress, which gave her very much the appearance of a growing Shanghai fowl.

So five years went by. Amelia was now an admirably preserved woman of thirty-six, showing remarkably well by lamp light, dressing with excellent taste, and sleek and smooth as a black cat—in fact, people who did not like her always averred that she reminded them of that uncertain animal.

About this time there was joined to her *coterie* a young lawyer of great promise, toward whom Amelia was especially attracted, and whom it was her pleasure to constitute the favorite of the time.

Charles Stafford was really a superior man, as young men go, but of course he liked to be petted and made much of, so he became a frequent visitor, and believed Amelia all that was charming.

As might have been expected, not many weeks passed before the whole programme of martyrdom was displayed before him, and he was quite shocked to see how his fair friend suffered.

One evening he had called, at Amelia's request, to read her a paper he had written for some professional magazine—there was no subject in which she was not interested. In the midst of it Mr. Richings' step was heard in the hall.

Charles looked up—resigned despair so collapsed Amelia's features that he could not go on from sheer distress. He sat, staring quite blankly at her until her husband came in, spoke affectionately to the wife, and greeted him with the utmost cordiality.

Still the subdued agony quivered in every muscle and line of the martyr's face. Mr. Richings saw that he had done something wrong; he could not exactly tell how he had erred; but that he had was evident.

"My creaking boots make you nervous," he said; "I quite forgot to change them, but I will now."

"Not on my account," she replied, plaintively, "I beg you will not; I can bear it very well."

"This wife of mine is all nerves," Richings said, playfully, to their guest.

Amelia cast down her eyes and sighed, raised them to the portrait, and evidently struggled with inward trial; while Stafford sat, not able to understand what was wrong, yet with the vague consciousness that the lady was in some way suffering the keenest torture, and the gentlemanly, pleasant husband was, at the bottom, a tyrant and monster.

"You were reading something to my wife," Mr. Richings said; "don't let me interrupt you. I am not very intellectual, still I can enjoy a good article, if you will allow me."

"There can be no objection," Amelia said, hastily, in a trembling, terrified way which made Charles feel quite guilty—of what he didn't know. "There is no secret, Mr. Richings, of course not."

"My dear, I never supposed there was."

"No, oh! no. You can hear it if you wish—only an essay. I am sure it will bore you."

"Not in the least, believe me."

"Oh! I beg—I entreat! I know it is selfish of me to allow myself any little pleasure. I will give all up, indeed I will. Nobody shall be distressed on my account!"

Mr. Richings could only pass it off as best he might; and Stafford was convinced that Amelia was afraid of her life; that in secret her husband bullied her and abused her for entertaining her "intellectual friends."

Some one called on business, and Mr. Richings went up to his library.

"You may go on now," Amelia said, with a distressing sigh. "Please go on, Mr. Stafford."

"But you look quite ill."

"No; I am always well! Don't notice me—remember that. No matter how I look, never heed it—all is well with me."

"Mr. Richings does not fancy books and literary pursuits, I judge," he said.

"You heard him say he did," she replied, adjusting the martyr smile; "he often says he does."

She looked so fixedly at the portrait, in such an agonized way, that Stafford could not resist asking whose it was.

"Mr. Richings' first wife," she faltered out. "They were very happy together; she was a lovely woman—not a weak, poor thing like me."

"You do yourself injustice," Stafford replied; "when you are the admiration of all who know you."

"Can that bring happiness?" she sighed. "Can the world's praises still the heart? Hush! Mr. Stafford, we tread on forbidden ground. These are subjects on which I never

allow myself even to think. Go on with your article—oblige me, please."

Stafford obeyed, thinking her words a little overstrained; but, believing that to be a woman's way, and so convinced that she was superior to the generality of her sex, that he would never have ventured to consider her silly or affected.

A few years after Marian returned from school. She was now nearly eighteen, and her father decided that it was time for her to be a woman. Of course his wife consented—she did everything in a proper manner. Marian had a party, looked very pretty, but went crying to bed; for Amelia had made her feel just as guilty and wicked as she used to do in her childish days, besides convincing three-quarters of the company that her step-daughter tortured and insulted her in every way possible.

Going into society was not the pleasant thing Marian had expected. She held confidential talks with her grandmother, but the old lady could not help her, for Amelia would allow no one but herself to go out with the girl.

She petted her a great deal, as far as words went, dressed her too richly for her age, in spite of expostulations, and made her own attire plainer than ever before.

Of course people said, "She's a slave to that girl; her life is quite worn out between father and daughter," and that was just what the martyr wanted.

Her intimate friends pitied her, and she never checked them. They told her she ought to resist, but she only shook her head despairingly.

"I am a poor, weak thing! Don't pity me—nothing lasts forever—at least I shall have the consciousness of having performed my duty."

In vain Marian pleaded with her.

"Tell me when I do wrong, mamma; scold me—beat me. I could bear anything better than to see you look so wretched."

"Have I ever blamed you?" she would answer, in sad surprise. "I love you as my own child! I cannot help my looks; I am over sensitive; trifles stab me like daggers; but do not mind me—I wish to cure myself of this weakness."

So Marian could only go weeping to her grandmother again.

"Do the best you can, my dear," the old lady would say. "I never could understand your mother, but she seems a very conscientious woman."

It was some time before Stafford saw much of Marian, somehow she was never called down when he was there. At parties her step-mother

kept her dancing so constantly that she had no time for conversation, and Charles never danced.

But he knew Mrs. Gray very well—she had been a friend of his mother, so took an interest in the young man; and one night at her house he met Marian.

The three spent a delightful evening, and the consequence was, that Stafford fell deeply in love with the young girl. To Amelia's surprise he asked for her the next time he called, and, before long, the martyr's quick eyes discovered the truth.

What she felt no mortal will ever know, but the cat's claws were carefully hidden. I do not mean to insinuate that she loved Stafford, or that she would have been guilty of any wrong; but a woman such as I am describing is worse than a wicked one. She liked to know that the young man was greatly interested in her, respected and admired her, and she had no intention of allowing him to fall in love with any one. But for once the martyr was outwitted—the mischief was done. Still it might not be irreparable, and Amelia went calmly to work, dangerous as a masked battery.

She hated Marian now, would really have been delighted to see her attacked with small-pox, or any other disease that would have ruined her youth and pretty face. But nothing of all that did she betray. She was calm, smiling, and more affectionate than ever. She could not stem the tide as yet; Stafford was too impetuous and daring. Three months had not elapsed before he told her, with his own lips, that the only hope of happiness he had was to marry her daughter.

Still Amelia smiled, kissed Marian, and promised to use all her influence with her husband. It was decided by Mr. Richings that the engagement should go on; but marriage was, for the present, out of the question—his daughter was much too young.

So the lovers were very happy for several weeks, and Amelia watched them, smiling as sweetly as ever. Stafford talked a great deal to Marian about her step-mother's affection for her, and of course the girl had not a word to say. He admired Amelia as much as ever, consulted her more, and they grew better friends every day.

There came a time when little differences sprang up between the young lovers: each made a confidant of the mother. Marian began to think Stafford exacting, and occasionally, in comparison with Amelia, his betrothed appeared childish to him.

"My dear," said the martyr, "Charles is

exactings, but you must endure it—all men are so."

When Charles complained, she looked pityingly at him.

"Marian is very young yet. She will never be an intellectual woman; but men prefer thoughtless girls—grown children—for wives."

To a man of intellect this was not agreeable. When Marian came into the room he thought her actually frivolous. Truth to say, she never appeared to advantage in her step-mother's presence.

One evening Amelia was more plaintive and easily injured than usual. If Marian agreed with her in opinion, she suffered; if she ventured to differ, she was martyred to a terrible extent; and it was so admirably done that Stafford was forced to think Marian really pert and unmanageable.

At last, by some chance, the girl unfortunately alluded to her mother. They had been discussing a novel, in which an admirable step-mother played an important part.

"Yet, one never forgets the lost parent," Marian said; "although I was so young, my mother's memory is the most beautiful one of my life."

"She was a lovely woman," Amelia replied, naturally; "you will never cease to regret her."

"Never," Marian said, thoughtlessly.

Amelia put her handkerchief to her eyes. This time she did not allow her tears to flow gently. She sobbed to such an extent that her companions were alarmed.

"Mamma," said Marian, "you know I did not mean to pain you! What have I said?"

"Go on—go on," monned the martyr; "this morning your father—now you! I have tried to do my duty, heaven is my witness! Oh! death would be welcome, very, very welcome to me!"

She rushed out of the room in a tragic way, leaving Marian pained and indignant; while Charles felt that there was something back of the affair, and that Marian was more to blame than appeared.

"You were very wrong, Marian," he said. "How could you speak to your mother in that way?"

"I merely repeated her own expression—thoughtlessly too."

"You know how easily she is pained."

"Do you mean to blame me?" she asked, rather passionately, her patience fairly giving way.

"The very tone in which you ask shows that

you consider yourself so," he replied, offended with her manner.

"Please not to lecture me," she said, angrily; "I am in no humor to bear it."

"Nor have I any intention to deliver one—I have no desire to interfere—be your own judge of what is becoming to a young lady."

Of course Marian answered haughtily, he retorted in the same tone. They had a violent quarrel; he tore out of the house in the insane way any man would have done, left her sobbing upon the sofa, fully convinced that everything was at an end, and nothing but utter misery in store for her.

An hour after, Amelia came down stairs and found her in that sad state. Of course she insisted upon knowing the whole, threw her arms about her daughter's neck and wept bitterly.

"I brought it on you," she cried; "oh! my dear one! But leave all to me—I can arrange it. It is true Stafford is headstrong and obstinate, he expects so much from the woman he loves, that it is difficult to get on with him."

"I shall never suit him if he looks for perfection," Marian replied, irritated against him by her mother's remark.

"You will try," Amelia said, gently. "You must humor him, be gentle and submissive."

"You know I am not the last, mamma; I feel that I have sometimes a right to exercise my own judgment."

"My dear, few men will allow that; it is a hard lesson to learn, but every woman must acquire it. With a man like our dear Charles, it is doubly necessary that you should learn submission and self-control."

"He has no right to be so exacting, mother; I have already yielded too far."

"Go to bed now," said the martyr; "leave me to settle this difficulty; all shall be well, trust me."

The next day, Amelia sent for Stafford, and had a long conversation with him, which ended in making him more desolate than he had felt before.

"Do not let me be the cause of any estrangement between you," she pleaded. "Never heed my little sufferings; I have told you a thousand times that I am foolishly sensitive. Promise me that you will be reconciled to Marian?"

"I give you my word."

"And love her as before?"

"I could not help that."

Amelia did not strike him, but it required a powerful effort to retain her composure.

"I am glad of that. I know Marian well—her heart is a good one, she is not affectionate,

but faithful. She is weak and childish, but you must instruct her. One thing, Charles: you must never allow yourself to dwell upon the difference there is between you—so surely as you do, you will be utterly wretched."

The picture she drew was not a very pleasant one. He wondered that he had not discovered Marian's frivolousness before his feelings became so deeply interested.

"Shall I tell her to come down?" she asked.

"If you will be so kind."

Amelia went herself, knowing well that Marian had gone to her grandmother's.

"She is out," the martyr said, when she returned. "Do not be distressed, my friend; it is only a childish pique."

"And she knew that you had sent for me?"

"Do not be angry, Mr. Stafford! Come to-night—promise me. Will you come?"

"If you wish it, although I confess that I am offended more seriously than before."

"Do not say so—for all our sakes—for your own peace! No, you must not repeat that!"

He promised to come, and took his departure. When Marian returned, her step-mother told her that Stafford had been there; but to solace her evident disappointment, added that he was positively to return that evening.

During the afternoon, Amelia received a note from him, explaining that he expected to be kept in court until late at night, and enclosing a letter to Marian. That billet never reached the young girl!

All the evening, Marian waited with what patience she might, but Stafford did not come. Amelia drove her nearly frantic with her condolences, and she went broken-hearted to bed.

The next day she was invited out; her step-mother insisted upon her going. She thought herself that Marian had been submissive long enough; it was time now to teach Stafford that he could not act the tyrant so unscrupulously already.

Marian went with the gay party upon some spring excursion, concealing her anguish with all the strength she could summon. Stafford called; Amelia received him, and, of course, told him where Marian had gone, mentioning the name of one of her companions—a young man of whom the lover was especially jealous.

He wrote upon the instant a cruel, angry letter, which Amelia refused to deliver, but allowed him to leave it where Marian could not fail to find it.

The poor girl returned thoroughly worn-out, and found that terrible letter. She refused her

mother's consolation—she was so pale that even the martyr was frightened.

Up to her lonely chamber went Marian, and answered that letter as concisely and romantically as the heroine of a novel could have done.

"I restore your liberty to you, asking only that we may never meet again."

Then she went to bed utterly overpowered, and shrinking away with an undefinable dread, when her step-mother entered the room in her elaborate evening dress, to make sure that her darling had gone to rest.

Stafford was a very proud man, and, after receiving Marian's note, he made no farther effort toward a reconciliation. The martyr met him in her walks, she fairly turned his head by her pity for his distress; and into the bargain was guilty of a folly which she seldom perpetrated, she wrote him a sentimental letter, not with anything especially improper in it, but still too poetical and enthusiastic to have pleased a husband.

Stafford himself was a little puzzled, but he was so miserable that he thought but little of it. Amelia's consolations were all the comfort he had, he could not afford to laugh at her weaknesses.

So, for several days, Marian lay in her bed too ill to rise. Her father knew nothing of her troubles; and the martyr took good care that he should not. She proposed that Marian should take a journey; the girl was too miserable to resist, so everything was prepared for her to go and join her grandmother, who was visiting some relatives in a distant city.

Unfortunately for Amelia's plans, Mrs. Gray returned, unexpectedly, the very day before Marian was to start. She hurried to see her grandchild; and, as the martyr was out, they had the whole morning to themselves. It was not long before the shrewd old woman reached the very bottom of the whole affair: but not a word did she say.

Promising to return that evening, she went straight to the hotel where Stafford boarded, and mounted to his sitting-room.

"I thought I was old enough to risk a visit to a young gentleman," she said, as he rose sadly to receive her. "You have just come in—you have been out with Mrs. Richings. My dear boy, you are a fool; Marian is a baby; Mrs. Amelia is—no matter what—and I am the horrible old fairy who is going to set everything right."

She made him tell his story—listened to it attentively.

"And in your note to Amelia you enclosed

one for her, telling her why you could not call?"

"Yes."

"Which she never received, nor did she know you were to be at the house that morning—oh! you goose, you! Now for that terrible note she wrote you."

"It is on the table," he said, turning away.

Mrs. Gray picked up the first one that caught her eye—unfolded it—read a page, and turned in astonishment to the signature—it was the martyr's poetical epistle which she had stumbled on. Honorable and upright always, she read not a line farther.

"I beg your pardon, Charles," she said, dryly; "I have taken the wrong letter."

He turned round and colored crimson.

"I did not read the whole," she said; "don't blush so, I knew you were a dunce before. I have seen, heard, and read enough. Go and shave yourself, try and look a little more like a Christian, and come to my house."

She went back to Mr. Richings' house and found the martyr, who received her very nervously.

"There has been a quarrel between those children," Mrs. Gray said. "Don't you think it had better be made up?"

"It is too late," sighed the martyr; "I have done my best, but they are so headstrong."

"Very," replied the old lady, eyeing her so sharply that she felt quite uncomfortable. "I think, however, all can be explained."

"I have tried everything," said Amelia, shaking her head. "Now, Mr. Richings has heard of it, and declares that Marian shall not marry him, any way."

"Who told Mr. Richings?"

"Really I—I don't know; perhaps——"

"Who told him?" repeated Mrs. Gray. "Why, you did, to be sure—don't take the trouble to deny it! My dear, I perfectly understand the part you have taken in this whole affair."

"Do you come here to insult me?" cried Amelia, beginning to sob immediately. "You always hated me—you have done me all the wrong you could—set my husband and child against me—made my life miserable——"

"Stuff and nonsense!" interrupted the old lady. "There, stop and take breath while I tell you something."

"Wretch! reptile!" sobbed the martyr.

"Stop, I say! I have never interfered with you," continued Mrs. Gray, "never cared anything about you since I learned your real character. I have done all I could to protect Marian—you shall not ruin her happiness."

"What right? How dare——" began she.

"Stop, I tell you! We will have no trouble, no scene, but this understand: either your husband makes no opposition to this marriage, or I shall tell him that you are in the habit of writing sentimental letters to gentlemen."

Amelia fell back in her chair and never answered. It was of no use to weep or be a martyr—she was heartily frightened for once.

"Promise!" cried Mrs. Gray.

"Yes, oh! yes—anything! You have misunderstood—it is a mistake——"

"Don't tell any more untruths! You were jealous of Marian—you didn't want Stafford to fall in love with you, but you wanted to govern him. Don't say a word—don't look at me! Just set everything straight with your husband; and the day that the children are married, I promise to give your sentimental letters into your own keeping."

Amelia tried to go off into hysterics. Mrs. Gray coolly deluged her with water, so that she was glad to come to her senses very speedily. She essayed screaming—it was all in vain—she had to yield—the martyr was fairly conquered.

Mrs. Gray took Marian home with her, leaving Amelia to explain affairs to her husband.

An hour after, Charles Stafford and his betrothed sat in the old-fashioned parlor, happier than ever before.

"Let this make you wiser, my children—affliction brings its own reward," whispered Mrs. Gray, and she stole out of the room.

Nothing more was heard of the engagement being broken off, and Mr. Richings seemed happy as his child. Marian remained with her grandmother; and the martyr was left in peace to console herself as best she might.

Two months after, the pair were married, and Amelia was present, beautifully dressed, and doing the tender parent to perfection. But when the bride had gone, and the guests were dispersing, Mrs. Gray beckoned her into another room, and placed in her hands a sealed packet.

"I have redeemed my promise," she said. "I have no right to advise you, Amelia; but if you would cultivate your heart more, and poetry and martyrdom less, I believe that you would be much happier."

It is doubtful if that lady thanked her for her honest advice, or acted much upon it. But at all events, she was entirely cured of forming sentimental friendships, took to petting her husband, as a duty, careful to let the world know she considered it as such, and wore her martyr wreath with daily increasing grace.

THE LEAP YEAR PARTY.

BY MARY E. CLARKE.

"COUSIN," said Madge Carlton, suddenly breaking off in the midst of a merry song, "cousin Grace, I am going to give a leap year ball."

"A leap year ball?"

"Yes, this is leap year, so I mean to have some fun out of it. I will issue invitations for a ball to the ladies; each one shall then select the gentleman she will escort, call for him, bring him here, furnish his bouquet, and give him her arm to enter the room. The ladies shall invite the gentlemen to dance, make love to them, pass the refreshments at supper, and finally escort the 'dear creatures' home."

"It will be splendid! Of course there is no objection made to a serious proposal, if any of the ladies are so inclined?"

"Not at all. Now to make a list, and then get pa to consent. Come!"

Madge Carlton was the gayest little brunette that ever fluttered, butterfly-like, amongst the flowers of society. Madge was an heiress, a coquette, not a flirt, for she would not intentionally have wounded any one for worlds: but she could not help being pleased with attention, and showing she was pleased. Madge was tiny, beautiful, sparkling, loving, and lovely.

Madge Carlton had two lovers. Of admirers she had a score; but there were two men who had made it the first object of their life to love this bright little Madge. One loved hopefully, earnestly endeavoring to win a return. The other loved sadly, silently, not daring to woo the tiny fairy.

Harry Wells was handsome, talented, rich, a good dancer, a perfect gentleman, and a gay idler in fashion's haunts. Lawrence Hayes was also talented, but quiet and reserved. He had been Mr. Carlton's clerk for seven years, and had loved Madge when she was a winsome school girl. He never "made love" to his idol. He was poor, shy, and proud; and could not stoop to try to win the heiress, but he looked on when Harry Wells courted her, trying to think he should be happy if she married and was happy with his rival; crushing back his own ardent, unselfish love into hopeless, sad sorrow.

Which did Madge prefer? She knew these men loved her. Lawrence had never spoken,

yet with a woman's quick instinct she felt his love. She flirted gayly with Harry; rode with him, walked with him, and accepted his attentions; yet, with a perfectly frank, easy manner, she kept a wall of ice between Harry and herself; and while he could not tell what prevented him, he still felt that he had best not tempt his fortune yet. She was not so free with Lawrence. Gay, laughing, and radiant, she had a pretty, shy manner when alone with him. He attributed it to his own ten years seniority, and longed for the frank, girlish manner she exhibited toward Harry; yet, when he conversed with her, drawing out the treasures of a well-stored mind, and a pure, womanly heart, hidden under her gay manner, he sighed to think how great was the treasure he coveted. Sometimes he wished poverty could come to his employer, that he might gather his treasure close to his heart, shield her from every sorrow, and prove in adversity his great love. Under the grave reserve of his manner, none suspected this burning passion. None? Madge did!

It was the evening of the ball. Merrier laughter was never heard, brighter blushes never seen, than those in Mr. Carlton's parlor, on the evening of the leap year ball. A gay group of young people was collected near the hostess, who was the brightest reveler there. Lawrence watched her from his corner, where he stood toying with some ornament upon the mantle-piece. Harry was, as usual in such scenes, close beside her.

"Miss Carlton," said Mr. Harding, one of the group around Madge, "there is one condition in your invitation not complied with."

"Indeed! Rebellion in this camp must be put down! What is it?"

"The ladies do not make love to us!"

"No, they do not!" echoed several of the gentlemen.

"Shocking! Do they want an example? Mr. Harding, will you take my arm for a promenade?"

Mr. Harding looked down from his six foot height to the tiny little witch beside him, and then offered his arm.

"No, take mine! Mr. Harding!" a sigh.

"Miss Carlton, are you ill?"

"No;" another sigh. "Not ill when you smile upon me!" Everybody laughed at Madge's pretended love-making.

"Ladies!" said Madge, "take your partners for the first quadrille."

There was plenty of blushing and some pouting, as one or two of the most fascinating beaux pleaded prior engagements on a third or fourth invitation from some fair ones. Who would Madge choose? Harry, of course! Lawrence was watching her little figure flitting from guest to guest, finding places for dancers, and with merry grace putting bashful folks at ease, introducing couples, prompting timid girls, carrying smiles everywhere, leaving a streak of sunshine wherever she went. She stood before him. The smile died out, and she blushed crimson.

"Mr. Hayes, shall I have the pleasure of dancing the first quadrille with you?"

Lawrence bowed, offered his arm, and led her to a place. He thought,

"This is her duty-dance. She knows I am grave, and would not win the admiration of the gay beauties here, so her kind heart prompts her to dance once with me."

Harry was Madge's next partner; then other guests were invited; then Lawrence again; then again three times, but others came between, and Lawrence sighed as he noticed how gay and chatty she was with others, how timid, quiet, and reserved with him.

The evening sped on; it was quite late, and part of the guests had taken their departure. Some, however, yet lingered, dancing in the large parlor. In a little library on the same

floor as the ball room, Lawrence was sitting alone, when a fairy-like figure stood before him.

"Truant!" said Madge, "what are you doing here?"

"Have you missed me?" There was a deep thrill in his heart, a tremor in his voice.

"Oh!" said Madge, gayly, "you wish to remind me of my omission. I have danced with you, handed you ices, sent you a bouquet, but I have not made love to you. Shall I begin?"

There was a deep silence. The merry words she had used to many of her guests failed Madge now. His eyes were fixed upon her sorrowfully, lovingly. She softly crept up close to him, saying in a low tone,

"Lawrence!"

He started back.

"No! no! do not trifle with me! do not make a jest of my love! My love! Oh! Madge, do not tempt me to——" A strong man was Lawrence, but a great, choking sob interrupted him.

Madge's low, soft voice stole in on his heart,

"Do you love me, Lawrence?"

"Love you! Madge! Madge, I have loved you for seven years better than my life!"

She still crept closer to him, till her bright head was pillowed on his broad chest. Was it still a jest, a girlish freak?

"Lawrence! Lawrence!"

It was leap year, and she nestled close to him, as, daring his fate, he poured out the full flood of his love in strong, burning words, and the merry heart was bound to his, the tiny form was clasped close in his arms, the words of love were echoed at the ball given in LEAP YEAR.

THE RULING PASSION.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860, by Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.]

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 389.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE Arnolds had sailed, taking Amy with them; Hagar was left entire mistress of the farm house, an honor which she undoubtedly made the most of. There is no describing the comfortable meals that she took *tele-a-tele* with her sable lover before the kitchen fire. Whether it was that the absence and consent of her mistress had made Hagar unusually confiding, or that Dan became more courageous with the house all to themselves, it is difficult to say; but certain it was that, in less than three days after the family left home, Hagar and Dan were an engaged couple, and fell into those pleasant confidences that make the month before marriage a pleasant forerunner of the veritable honeymoon.

Still there was some little mystery about Hagar's movements that Dan could not help observing—a sly way of putting things out of sight when he came in suddenly, and of turning her back toward him when at work, which was rather depressing to a newly engaged man, who thirsted for mutual confidence, thorough appreciation, and all that sort of thing.

This state of affairs lasted only one day in the kitchen; but the effect remained behind, for Dan was of a susceptible temperament, and tormented with these exquisite sensibilities that vulgar persons denominate jealousy. Just now, of course, all these feelings were ready to start into full grown life with the first provocation. The very day after Dan had been blessed with a promise of Hagar's fair hand, as he denominated that hard-working member which washed Mrs. Arnold's dishes three times a day, he went to Norwich, and was hailed, while passing the post-office, with news that a letter had just arrived, directed to Miss Hagar Dun, to the care of Mr. B. Arnold.

Dan took the letter with studied indifference, but his heart had given one leap at first, and then fell in his bosom like a lump of granite. Who but the black gemman, Peter, could write to Hagar—his Hagar? Perhaps the dandy negro had proposed in that very letter—what if Hagar

should repent and look back with longing after a person who could offer her freedom, perhaps, with all the glory of a city life?

Dan ruminated in this fashion all the way home. Every ten steps he took out the letter, bent it into a tube, and examined the writing, not one word of which could the poor fellow have read, even with the help of a broken seal. Of course this process inflamed his imagination till every crudely formed letter, as he afterward poetically expressed it, was like a copper-head sent by that unprincipled negro to sting him in his happiness.

What should he do? Give the letter to Hagar, and thus immolate himself on the altar of a noble integrity? "Well," as Dan said, putting on his crownless hat with a dash, "he wasn't quite up to that, no how. Hagar was hisen, and hisen she should be in spite of a tarnal heap of crooked marks done up in that way just to tanterlize him."

So, with this indecorous, and, I grieve to say, immoral conclusion, Dan crushed the letter in his hand, and the hand deep in his trousers pocket, where he held on, as if determined to strangle every word it contained before the paper saw daylight again.

When Dan appeared before his betrothed, he was still crushing her letter deep down into his pocket, and there he stood, gazing upon her with a sort of mournful ferocity which set his eyes in a glare, and made his face blacker than ever.

Hagar observed this, and came toward him, rubbing a teacup hard with her crash towel, in a way that Dan took for defiance.

"Oh! Hagar! Hagar!" he cried, with a burst of indignant tenderness that made his thick lips quiver and his white teeth gleam.

"Why, Dan, what am it as 'stresses yer? Hearn anything 'bout our folks? Oh! my, der sloop is sunk! Dey have all gone plump to de bottom, ebery one on 'em. Gor Amighty hab mercy on us all, for we're poor niggers widout no master, no missus, nor nobody else ter tell us what ter do!"

the outbreak in the wrong direction astonished Dan so completely that he stood more rigid than ever; with his usually sleepy eyes wide open, and his lips falling heavily apart.

"Where was it? When was it? Oh! Dan! Dan! Lub me now a'most ter death, for I hain't got nobody else ter 'spress 'fection for me."

Hagar dashed the towel down from her eyes, and, making a plunge at her lover, threw both arms around his neck, so full of genuine grief that she really was quite unconscious of her own tender demonstration.

The granite of Dan's heart melted within him; but as he attempted to withdraw his hand to return her embrace, that fatal letter rattled in his pocket and he was rock again.

"Miss Dun, will yer jest please ter rise from dis bussom? Yer forgets der blushing 'priety as is so facernatin' in de fair sect."

"Dan," cried Hagar, aghast, and blushing till she grew black as midnight in the face, "scuse me, I wasn't contentious of what I was a-doing; them deaths came so sudden I——"

"There ain't no deaths as I know on, Miss Dun, on'y there may be," said Dan, settling himself in his clothes, which had been slightly damaged by Hagar's embrace.

"No death! Then the sloop hain't sunk?"

"Not as I know on."

"No, no; den what has happened?"

"Nothin'!"

"Nothin'! And yer did this jest ter cheat me out of a tender embrace. Oh! Dan!"

Hagar's eyes began to sparkle, and, taking the dish-towel which had just been doing duty at her eyes between both hands, she commenced to wring and twist it ominously.

"No, I didn't neither," said Dan, eyeing the towel askance. "It was you as offered; not I as asked."

"Dan!"

Hagar gave the towel an extra twist, and gathered both ends in her hand.

"Don't," said Dan, lifting his disengaged hand, "Hagar Dun, don't yer 'tempt ter obliterate de majesty ob de man yer goin' ter marry."

This was magnificently said, and Hagar's hand fell, dropping one end of the crash, which began slowly to untwist and resolve itself into a dish-towel again.

"Dan," she said, rendered almost breathless by his imposing look, "Dan, what does all dis 'mount to?"

"Nothin'," said Dan, towering with the grandeur of his conquest.

"Nothin'! Den what made yer look so?"

"I didn't look, no how."

"Dan, yer did."

"Yer mistook."

"No, I ain't. It's on yer face yit!"

"Den it's 'cause I'se 'stonished at dese unproper 'ceedings 'bout nothin'."

Hagar drew back quite crestfallen, and went to the kitchen table, where her dish-towel was put to its legitimate use again.

Dan saw her dejected air, and relented.

"Hagar," he said, drawing toward her.

"What am it, Dan?" was her meek reply.

"Daw ye lub me, Hagar?"

"Ter knows I duz."

"And nobody 'sides me?"

"Oh! Dan, how could I?"

"True 'nough," said Dan, drawing himself up; "but does yer?"

"Oh! Dan, if yer could but read dis bussom you'd see 't'other'n but yer own image and 'scription dar."

"But Peter?"

"Peter! I don't care dat for him!" cried Hagar, lifting her wet hand from the dish-pan, and snapping her fingers till a little shower of drops flashed over her lover.

"You doesn't, Hagar? Say dat 'ere agin, jest once."

"Not that!" cried the excited damsel, making her fingers crack again. "He's mean as pusley, dat ar nigger, Pete, and meaner too. Mind I says it."

"And if he was here now, don't say yer wouldn't speak to him," said Dan, artfully.

"Yes, I does say it."

"Fair and square?"

"Fair and square. Try me if I don't toe de mark, dat's all."

"And if he was ter write yer a letter all crinkle cranked over like a bush fence, would yer read it?" inquired the arch rogue.

"Read it! What, I? No, I rather think you'd find out!" she said, with emphasis, as if reading had been one of her lightest accomplishments.

"But yer'd kinder want ter know what was in it, now wouldn't yer?"

"Not a word! If that 'ere imperent nigger should dare ter sen a letter ter me, I'd chuck it right inter the fire, see if I wouldn't."

"Now, would yer?" said the sly scamp, hitching up his shoulders and striking a position, as if he were about to break into a double shuffle, while the hand crept about eagerly in his pocket.

"Yes, I would—thar!"

"Den, chuck dis 'ere varmint goes—dar!"

The hand was jerked out of his pocket, Pete's letter flew into the midst of a bright blaze and flashed up the chimney, a black scroll fringed with scintillations of fire.

"Why, Dan, what am you 'bout?" cried Hagar, with her mouth and eyes wide open.

"Jest ter save yer de trouble of doin' it yerself. I've sent Pete's letter sky-high—he! he! he!—oh! golly, I'se so happy! Jest come to dis bussom, lubliest ob de fair sext, yer Dan 'aint gwine to derject yer from dat seat ob happiness agin no how. Lubly Hagar, don't look so skeered, I knows yer lub me—dat are letter am de proof—and I'se happy as a rabbit in snow-time wid a chunk of sweet apple under his nose, oh! Hagar!"

While Dan was uttering this speech, and approaching Hagar with the most insinuating tenderness, that remarkable female had been making up her mind and twisting the towel at the same moment. When he stooped gallantly to gather the sable roses from her hot cheek, her arm flew back, and crash came the twisted towel on his head, with a force and precision that made Dan dash into a break-down at once. Hagar, half crying, and yet shrieking with delight, prepared herself for another onset, but Dan, seeing her design, bolted through the out-door and fled for the barn.

That night, I am grieved to say, Dan went supperless to bed, on the highest hay-mow that he could reach by desperate climbing, and Hagar, in her lonely room, had time to reflect that "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," and that, after all, she could not have read Peter's letter if it had reached her ever so safely. Then there was something that touched Hagar in the boldness of the burning, and the skill by which she had been led to almost authorize it. For the first time, our sable damsel began to feel a dawning of pride about her lover. Then thrills of fear set in, lest she had gone too far, and driven him quite away with her hempen snail.

All night long she listened for some sound of his return, but a dead stillness settled around her, and the heart in her honest bosom grew heavier and heavier, till she fell asleep with tears swelling under her black eye-lids. In the morning Hagar arose penitent and subdued—no fire in the kitchen—no Dan to fill her tea-kettle and grind the rye-coffee, while she prepared the substantial dishes and spread the table. This was very lonely after the devotion and tender courtship of the days that had gone before. Still Hagar hoped and watched; at every sound her heart gave a leap and fell back

again, like a trout in its brook, but no Dan presented himself. Still, like a sensible woman, Hagar went on with her work; she cut the rosiest slices of ham for his eating, made the coffee as strong again as usual, and brought out a lump of the richest maple-sugar to sweeten it with. Still no Dan.

Everything was ready—the hot Johnny-cake, the ham, with its delicious flavor sending up its steam through a brace of fried eggs, that lay crisp and golden on each ruddy slice.

Hagar had no heart to eat her breakfast alone, so she covered the dishes, placed them in a warm corner of the hearth, and went forth in search of the lost one. A forlorn hope led her to the barn. If he had not taken shelter there what could she do? Perhaps her cruelty had driven him to desperation, and he had taken to drink and fallen into total depravity. It seemed an age since she had driven the poor fellow forth—quite long enough for a desperate man to work out his ruin, and break her heart with the knowledge of it.

With these penitent feelings Hagar entered the barn and looked sorrowfully around. Everything was still. A group of chickens picking up wheat, on the threshing-floor, was all the sign of life she could discover. But in a desperate hope she lifted up her voice and called out hoarsely,

"Dan! ho, Dan!"

No answer—nothing but a faint rustle of the hay far overhead. It might be a chicken building its nest, but the sound was not exactly like that.

"Dan, oh! speak, am yer thar?"

A more decided rustle, and out from the hay a dusky head, looking down upon her from a loft far up in the top of the barn.

"Oh! Dan, come down—come down—I'se so sorry, 'pend on't I'll never do it agin."

"Oh! Hagar, how could yer?"

"Come," said Hagar, rebuked by the tender reproach, and lifting her eyes imploringly upward, "come and see what I'se got for yer."

"Dat crash towel," muttered Dan, rubbing his wool dolorously.

"Oh! Dan, I'se 'pented ob dat in dust and ashes, I has, so don't fling it in my face no more. I'se cut one ob de new hams, and cooked dem eggs yer brought in last thing afore yer went ter town—and sich a Johnny-cake! Do come afore its cold!"

Dan waited for no more, but came scrambling down from the upper loft, his wool bristling with hay, and his face shining with smiles. At

the second mow he made a halt, overtaken by a sober second thought.

"Hagar," he said, looking down upon her with benign fascination, "if I comes when yer calls me, and you should throw dem fair arms round dis neck, I should 'preciate it dis time, and no mistake."

Hagar waved her hand with great dignity.

"Don't yer mention it, Dan. I blushes all over at de 'membrance ob my indiscreetness—smudder dat thought in yer bussom, and come down to breakfast. It's getting cold."

Dan slid down the hay and lighted on the floor with a rebound. Then the two breakfasted lovingly together.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEN the marriage of Laura de Montreuil was settled upon, her brother, always kind and over-indulgent, purchased one of those fine old mansions that are now almost swept away from the shades of New Haven, and fitted it up for her future home. With the quick look which accompanies refinement like his, he saw that the future bridegroom would be best pleased by a broad display of that wealth and elegance which it had always been his ambition to obtain. So he gave way to Laura's rather sumptuous taste, and out of the fine old mansion, with its grounds stiffly laid out with box borders, tall poplars, and groups of old-fashioned shrubbery, she wrought for herself and lover a sort of fairy palace. Shaken and snowy draperies floated over the windows. Thick carpets yielded, like wood-moss, to the tread; chairs, sofas, and cabinets that might have graced the rooms of a court lady, gave imposing grandeur to the low-ceiled rooms and ponderous mantle-pieces; andirons of bronze and glittering brass stood guard in each broad fire-place, and upon the upper leaf of the massive hall-door a ponderous brass knocker reverberated in announcement of each visitor as he entered the house.

If the house was cheery and sumptuous, certainly it was the more fit for that brilliant and queenly girl, who seemed born for a palace, and to be the sovereign of any hall she trod.

Laura, like many another loving and noble girl, could have made herself content in any place with the husband of her choice; but she was not the less in love, or the less charming, because the power of gathering objects of beauty around her existed to an almost unlimited extent. She had been accustomed to things of beauty all her life, and in her own nature was luxurious. But deep beneath all this lay a

character so grand and strong that she could have flung all these outside belongings from her life without a sigh, had the real good of a beloved object required it.

But the luxuries which wealth gives are pleasant things, and love nestled in velvet is not the less love, if the spirit of self-sacrifice broods there even with folded wings.

With Laura life was full of superb happiness. Proud of her lover, glorying in his fine person and strong character, she worshiped where a weaker woman would only have loved. She exulted in the power of bestowing upon the princely man—for such he was to her—wealth and luxuries that a monarch might have been content with. If she could have gathered the rosy clouds of morning, and looped them above his couch with stars from heaven, she would have left the skies so much darker for his sake. His step, as it fell on the oaken floor of the hall, thrilled her like music; his smile fell upon her like sunshine on a rose, her cheek bloomed and her lips parted redder beneath it. The white eye-lids grew tremulous as they drooped to shade the happiness that sparkled beneath them. At such times love made her very, very beautiful.

Arnold was happy, too, after a fashion. Indeed, it may be considered doubtful if men like him, wax in principle and iron in self-love, can ever experience those sensitive regrets which wing every wrong with a pang to those of more sensitive natures. With his strong, hard, fervid character, to will was to be right, and every effort of conscience to reach his heart fell away unheeded as rain drips from the plumage of a bird, only touching the outer surface. He seemed cheerful, perhaps was so, for with the arrogance of a powerful organization, he looked with contempt upon the efforts of those less boldly gifted, and had cast all fear of consequences from his mind. Was that weak, pretty girl by the saw-mill at Yantic Falls to break up his magnificent fortunes; she who still blushed with pleasure if he but looked upon her? As for "the old folks at home," were they not chained to his wishes by their own exceeding love for himself? Besides, if they attempted any annoyance, was he not equal to the occasion? Arnold was a traitor, but never a coward. His sins were all strong and audacious. Money, pomp, and power were his ruling passion. To the shrine of that deity he was ready to lay down every honest affection, every honorable feeling. The glitter of life won his idolatry, its solid gold he trampled under foot, without feeling its value or regretting its loss.

Thus Arnold was happy—if the last moments of such men can be called happiness—even in committing an act of domestic treason more cruel than that which has left his name black on the lips of posterity. His intellect was powerful, its perversion complete; while the feeble conscience, that sometimes fluttered through his better moments, was like a helpless bird beating its way through a storm.

Another man would have asked for a quiet, if not secret marriage; but to Arnold half his ideas of happiness lay in the eclat of a splendid festival, so, with his usual reckless daring, he sent out boldly and proclaimed his coming grandeur, by invitations far and near. With him success was nothing, if the world were not challenged to admire and envy.

When Paul de Montreuil returned from Norwich, bringing word that the whole Arnold family would come to the wedding, Arnold asked a few careless questions about his visits, and, among others, if he had seen anything of the Leonards.

Yes, Paul remembered seeing Joshua Leonard swinging some children in the minister's orchard, and having admired the pretty Amy, as she came in from a supper-table under the apple trees, where she had been busy as a bee, her companions told him.

Arnold listened attentively, and a cloud came to his forehead. Did he wish to hear that Amy was pining herself to death? Could his clamorous self-love be appeased with nothing less than that?

Then Paul spoke of his own prosperous wooing, and the face of the hard man cleared up radiantly. What, a double marriage! would all the vast wealth of the De Montreuil pass into his own family? He had accomplished all this, and how? By sweeping aside scruples over which common men stumbled or stood still. How the man gloried in his own hardihood!

But Laura was happy as a bird of paradise. Hannah, whom she loved so, should be twice her sister. Paul bound to her and her idol by new ties, she could hardly believe in her own happiness, it seemed fabulous.

This was the state of things when the Maria Jane from Norwich put in at the long wharf, and its passengers made the way to the hotel, which was scarcely more than a nominal home to the younger Arnold. A sad and dejected party it was which presented itself before the good landlady. They looked more—as she afterward expressed herself—like people going to a funeral than a wedding, with such faces!

all the lights she could put in her best room failed to render it cheerful. Then the young man was away, as usual, and she felt herself quite put about to entertain them.

True enough, Arnold was with Laura that evening, and a more perfect contrast between the dim room where the Arnold family sat, and the exquisite boudoir in which the young man was lounging away the last few hours of his single life, could not well be imagined.

Laura stood before him in her wedding-garments. The crimson curtains, sweeping over the windows, served that lovely picture as a background—the lights of a gilded candelabrum fell athwart her robe of thick white silk, and made the silver bouquets with which it was brocaded, glitter like frost work; diamond drops fell like dew among the white roses that crowned the sweep of her beautiful hair, and lighted up her stomacher in clusters of rainbow flame. The sleeves, which fitted close down to her elbow, terminated in a mist of lace, like that which left a scarcely perceptible shadow on her bosom.

From the rustling folds of her robe her little feet peeped out, with dainty satin shoes, balanced on heels that seemed cut from coral, and with rubies lying like frozen flame in the heart of each white rosette.

With his usual haste for gratification, he had urged her to don this dress, that he might know how beautiful she would be when the wedding evening came; why should he wait till then and share her presence with so many others?

He had been praising her; you could have told it by the peachy bloom on her cheeks, the shy gladness that broke through those curling lashes. Yes, she was beautiful, and he had told her so. The fever of half-sated admiration glowed in his eyes, the triumph of his "ruling passion" was so vivid that she could not help but think 't love.

"Now," she said, blushing and shrinking like an over-dressed child, "may I go and put these things away before the gloss is brushed off? or have you some defect to point out?"

"Defect!" exclaimed Arnold, with ardor. "Who shall presume to question anything you wear or say? Not I! To the depths of my heart I feel how beautiful you are. Not the natives here! When they have seen anything approaching this it will astonish them."

"I hope so, if that pleases you," she said, blushing happily, as she swept past him and tried to make her escape.

He caught her hand and kissed it ardently. She laughed and struggled till the dimples came

to her cheeks; then with half-tender, half-coquettish protest, obeyed his gesture, and sunk to an ottoman which stood by his chair. Thus, with those rich garments settling around her like crusted snow, she formed another picture, at which he gazed in greedy triumph.

There is seldom perfect equality in marriage, because from depth of affection or circumstance the balance of love preponderates on one side or the other, thus rendering one party the monarch, and the other a subject. That man or woman is generous indeed if he or she never presume upon the power which is obtained through excess of love in another. Arnold was not of this class. He loved to test the extent of his authority over that queenly nature, and kept her at his feet, as we trifle with a child.

"So you like the dress?" she said, looking down upon it; "but I was very foolish to indulge you. It will seem old and familiar on our wedding day."

"Perhaps so," he said, carelessly; "but I am always brushing the down from my fruit. Never mind, it is pretty enough for a second examination, and one never tires of these things; there is power as well as show in them."

He touched the cluster of jewels on her bosom with a gleam in his eyes that made her shrink. Did he indeed value those things so much, not because they were hers, but from the value that they represented?

She felt this question in her heart without putting it clearly before her intellect, but it made her thoughtful for a moment. He saw it, and touched her cheek. "Do you love me?" he said, in a voice that was in its very tones a caress. She brightened, like a flower when the sun rises, but only answered with a brilliant flash of the eyes and a smile that fell upon him like a glow of light.

He leaned back in his chair, toying with the rings upon her fingers, and smiling in the fullness of his content.

That instant a heavy knock sounded from the front door, and directly after a servant passed in from the hall, announcing an old gentleman who was in search of Mr. Arnold.

Laura started up, blushing crimson beneath the admiring eyes of her servant, which were fixed on her singular costume. She stood a moment irresolute, then fled through a side door, while Arnold followed her with an earnest glance. He saw the white folds of her dress fluttering through the darkness beyond, and, half-tempted to follow, moved a step toward the door.

"Go, go," cried a laughing voice. "It will take me a good hour to get into a civilized dress again; but come in the morning early, perhaps they will have arrived; but any way don't fail to come. *Au revoir!*"

She glided back a few steps, kissed her hand, and darted off, calling out, "*Au revoir! au revoir!*"

Arnold turned away, and followed the servant, who stood waiting outside the door.

An old man stood in the hall waiting.

"Ah! is it you, sir?" said Arnold, holding out his hand with some constraint. "I did not expect you quite so soon."

The old man took the hand reached out to him; but Arnold noticed that the hard fingers which closed on his were cold as ice.

"They have all come, I suppose," said Arnold, dropping the hand, as he turned to search for his hat: "so I will go with you at once. You must have had a good wind?"

"Yes, I think so; but didn't notice about it," answered the father, absently; and they went out together, falling into dead silence, as they threaded the dark streets; not arm in arm, but walking a little apart, as if some invisible bar kept them from that close proximity which persons who love each other without stint are sure to seek.

While the elder Arnold had been standing in the hall of de Montreuil's dwelling, a female figure, which had followed him all the way from the hotel, lingered in the shadows that lay heavily on the street waiting for him to come forth. She had not watched long when the two men whom she most wished, yet dreaded, to see, appeared in the open door, revealed clearly by a tall light which a servant held in the background. She saw that the old man's face was pale and strangely stern, while a black frown lowered on the forehead of his son. She shrank against the palings of a vast garden, whose fragrance swept across her like a mockery, as the two men passed her so near that an outstretched hand might have touched them. Her heart beat so thick and fast that she grew faint in the atmosphere of his presence; but when he was gone, and she heard only the sound of his retreating footsteps, she staggered forward with a moan upon her lips, as if to follow.

The servant stood in the doorway, holding up his candle that the two guests might find their way more surely into the street. He was retreating and about to close the door, when Amy came rapidly up the steps and asked for the lady.

It was still early in the evening, and the man

naturally mistook her for one of the sewing-women who had been constantly going in and out of the house, almost at will, for the last ten days. So, merely observing that mademoiselle was in her own apartment, he, no doubt, turned into a side room, and left her alone in the hall. A broad, oaken staircase, with carved ballustrades, ascended from the hall. At the first landing stood a bronze statue, holding a torch with one hand, while it pointed upward with the other. To her excited imagination this image seemed directing her to her destination: so she mounted the stairs and glided away into the chambers above. There was no light in the upper hall, save that which came from the landing below, but that proved enough to reveal something of the chamber which she entered through a door which stood ajar. It was a spacious apartment, with a vast white bed standing in the centre, like a snow heap, for floods of white drapery brooded over and fell around it, looking grandly spectral in the dim gleams that shot up from the statue. The wind, as it stole through the window, brought with it a rustle of the silken curtains, and some delicate perfume penetrated the atmosphere, as if flowers were breathing somewhere in the darkness. Beyond the bed, an arrow of light shot half across the room from a door that stood on the latch. Amy crossed the carpet, without a sound, for it was thick and heavy as velvet moss. A moment's hesitation, a quick breath, and she knocked at the door.

There was a sweeping rustle of silks within—a slight jingle, as if some ornament had been hastily flung down, and then a clear voice called out,

"Come in!"

Amy opened the door and stood on the threshold, struck dumb by the scene which presented itself. Before a dressing-table, draped with white lace, and surmounted by a mirror so broad and bright that it flung back a dozen beautiful objects, stood Laura de Montreuil, in full bridal dress, as if she had just come from the altar. Like a white swan, who admires its own graceful image in a lake, she surveyed herself, with a sort of pleasant wonder that anything could be so beautiful. Her round arms were uplifted, and she was bending her head slightly sideways, trying to undo the wreath of roses that crowned it.

"Why don't you come and help me?" she cried, dropping her hands wearily.

Amy stepped forward and took the crown from her head, absolutely unconscious of the action. Laura's face was bent downward, and she had

no idea that it was not her maid who offered the service, till she resumed her position and saw Amy Leonard standing before her with the bridal crown in her hands. A pang of astonishment seized upon her; she reached forth her hand, took the roses, and laid them slowly on the table, keeping her fascinated eyes on that pale face.

"Amy Leonard!"

"Yes, lady, it is I," said Amy, in so sad a voice that Laura's heart fell to the sound.

They stood in silence, looking at each other until both grew white with intuitive dread.

"You wish to talk with me—you have something to say," faltered Laura at last, trembling in all her limbs.

"Yes," answered Amy, "I came on purpose, and found my way here. How, I can hardly tell, for it seems as if I were walking in a dream."

"Well," said Laura, faintly, "we are together; you have a right to say anything to me, no matter how cruel the thing is. You saved my life, Amy Leonard, and it belongs to you. What you want to say may be death, you know, but speak; I am only a coward in one thing."

"And I in everything," said Amy.

"No, no, Amy Leonard, you are an angel! I only wish I were one bit like you. Coward! Great heavens! and those logs rolling and dipping you down, down, into those black waters—still you held on—I feel your grip in my hair now. I hear the waters gurgle, and see the black streams pouring over that poor face. May God forsake me if I ever forget that fearful time, Amy."

"That was nothing. We must not think of it, for it looks like a claim. I couldn't help doing what I did, you know, and didn't consider what I was about. There was no merit, not a bit. If I hung on tight to you, or the log, it was just the cowardice that was in me. So forget that. You must. I can't have it remembered in any way."

Laura shook her head, smiling sadly enough.

"I cannot forget anything, Amy, and should hate myself if that one hour of our two lives could ever leave my heart."

Amy heard this impatiently, and put out her hands, as if to force back the gratitude that oppressed her.

"Stop!" she said, with a wild glitter of the eye. "That dress—that room—the roses with which I have decrowned you—what do they mean? Are you already married to my—to Benedict Arnold?"

Laura blushed like a crimson sunset, and

gathering both hands over the jewels on her bosom, strove to hide them in the shame of her detected vanity.

"Are you married?" said Amy, with cold stillness.

"No. It was a piece of folly. He wanted to see how it would look, so I put the dress on; for oh! Amy, I can deny him no one thing that he asks. Don't think worse of me than I deserve. Indeed I don't care myself. It isn't vanity nor pride, only he wished it."

Amy saw nothing of the dusky blush—heard nothing of this breathless excuse, except the first words: *She was not married.*

There was no brightening of the face, only a look of infinite relief, as if the tension of some painful doubt had broken away.

Amy cast down her eyes and trembled. How was she to begin? What could she say, being just to the truth and yet keeping faith with him?

Laura looked at her visitor with anxiety, not unmingled with impatience; but Amy drooped her head upon her bosom, till the features were almost hidden; and then a strange terror came upon Laura, her eyes shone painfully, her lips parted and grew white. She recoiled to the dressing-table, and pressed one hand hard upon it for support.

Amy looked up, and the white faces of those two miserable young creatures read each other. Laura spoke first, but her voice, usually mellow and joyous, was so hoarse and low, that a look of terror broke into Amy's face, and she advanced a step, prompted to offer help.

Laura pushed her back with both hands, desperately, soothingly. Where was her gratitude then? What did she care for the life which would henceforth prey upon her soul like poison? Why was it given back to her? She fell upon her knees by the table, its filmy drapery trembled beneath the shiver of her frame. The jewels she had just taken off flung a rainbow of mocking light athwart her forehead. She crushed the white roses under the weight of her arm, and thus the glittering mirror reflected her.

A long, dead silence followed, and then Laura lifted her face. It was white, and locked.

"Is this thing true?"

Amy bent her head. She could not speak.

Laura struggled slowly to her feet. She did not look like the same being who stood at the mirror only a few minutes before.

"Tell me all," she said, shivering.

"Ask him!"

"Him! Ask him! The traitor! The double

died traitor!" she cried, clenching her hand, while the hot life flamed back to her marble cheeks. "And you—you! Shameless!"

"No, not that," said Amy, in a low voice. "I have done wrong, but not to him or you."

"Not to me! his betrothed! his bride! his wife! Not to me!"

"No, lady, not to you. He loved me—or, God help me! I thought so—long before your face ever darkened our lives."

"He loved you!"

"Yes, he loved me—"

"And I—I—"

The unhappy young creature seemed sinking in the whirlwind of her own passion.

"Be appeased," said Amy, sadly. "He does not love me now, or why should you wear those garments?"

"He does not love you now—no, no. How could he?"

She wrung her hands, she clasped them fiercely above her head, and walked the room to and fro like a panther bounding to its jungle. All at once she stopped before Amy who was following her with affrighted eyes. She gazed at her till the fiery rage in her glance burned down.

"You saved my life—you saved my life—you, Amy Leonard. Oh! if you could take it now. If I could tear it out and fling it at your feet!"

"It was not my fault," pleaded Amy. "I couldn't help it any more than I could help him loving you."

"Loving me! Do you believe that?"

"Yes, I believe it."

"You believed this and did not die?"

"Oh, me! who could help it? Neither death nor love will come for the asking, or I should not be here to torture you."

"But you are soft and gentle—such people can change. See here, Amy, I am rich, very, rich. Oh! heavens! what is this? Am I so mean?—so lost?"

Again that noble girl bent to the whirlwind of her great sorrow. Surely the outrage that man had put upon her justified even that tempest of scorn and anguish. At last she was quieter, a mournful calmness came on, through which her grand nature began to reveal itself. She went into the next room and fell upon her knees before the white bed, wrestling with herself like one who would soon learn "to suffer and grow strong."

Amy knelt down also. Poor girl! that moment she would have given him up, could the sacrifice have been made without sin. Nay, so gentle and so true was her pure heart that she

would—for such things may be and sometimes are among women—she would have gone away with her innocent shame to suffer life alone, such was her gentle compassion for the unhappy girl in the next room.

While she was still on her knees Laura came in, a large cloak was flung over the whiteness of her robe, and the hood lined with crimson silk made the pallor of her face more impressive. She touched Amy on the shoulder.

"Come!"

"Where?"

"To the hotel where he has gone."

Amy stood up, wondering at the calmness that had fallen upon that noble face.

Without another word of explanation they went out together.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PAUL DE MONTREUIL, with the keen vigilance of love, had been the first to learn that the Arnold family had arrived. Before Hannah had changed her traveling dress, he was at the hotel whispering the joy which her presence gave him in her pleased ear. Mrs. Arnold was in her chamber, waiting with a heavy heart for the return of her husband, and for the first sight of her son.

But the two men did not return so promptly as she expected, under one of the noble elms which shaded the grounds around the village they had paused in deep conversation. Both were agitated, and the voice of the old man was stern and deep, almost as if it had been uttering a malediction.

"Yes, Benedict," he was saying, "before this girl should be left to her ruin, I will tell that which shall destroy you."

"What, the thing you hinted at when I was home! as if I gave it a thought."

"I saw you fire the shavings with my own eyes, but could not believe what I saw till the flames broke out of the windows, and the store was in a bright blaze."

"You saw this and did not inform. It is too late now, so don't threaten, no one would believe you; the insurance has been paid and spent long ago. I thought my own father knew me better than to suppose I would be frightened into anything, especially with threats about a dead matter like this. Besides you allowed the insurance to be paid without speaking."

"True, true, I was a coward, and had no strength from that hour till the good God saw fit to call me back to his fold. I tried to drown all I saw that night out of my brain. But since

then I have become a man, an honest man, for that debt of sin has been paid, every farthing."

"Paid! What, the insurance?"

"Yes, Benedict, your sin has made me a poor man, but, thank God, I am free of that sin."

"You have played the fool to this extent, and how?"

"I have mortgaged the farm, and your mother and I are working and saving every way to keep the old roof over our heads; but your debt is paid so far as man is concerned."

"So you have given away the home from over my mother's head, and now follow me with reproaches. It is doubtless the part of a good Christian to first disinherit, and then pursue an only son with threats of ruin."

"I do no such thing, Benedict. So far as the power lay in me I have atoned for your crime."

"Crime, sir!"

"Crime, I said, but another I will never see go unpunished. This girl, the daughter of my old friend—while it is time—she must be saved."

"But I am pledged, openly pledged to marry another; you know that, yet come to me with this sort of preaching, as if faithlessness to one woman were not the same as desertion of another. I cannot marry both, that you must allow."

"I will not argue this matter," said the elder Arnold, "but my pledge is given to Joshua Leonard. It shall be fulfilled."

"Not by me, sir, I am not to be coerced. If the girl has pursued me here, take her back again before she attempts mischief, or it'll be the worse for her, tell her this."

"No, I will not."

"Then I will, and in words that shall make themselves felt in every nerve of her body. How dare she pursue me in this way?"

Arnold came out from the shadow of the elm. As he ceased speaking and walked angrily across the green, the starlight shone on his face, and it was that of a demon. He entered the hotel with an imperious step and a storm in his eyes. With these feelings he had no wish to meet his mother, and received Hannah's affectionate greeting almost with a rebuff. He was annoyed at Paul's presence, and, drawing Hannah aside, whispered in rude haste,

"Where is she? Where is Amy Leonard? I must see her alone."

"I don't know, Ben, she went out, I fancy. But what is the matter, you look so strange, and father too? Dear father, you are pale."

Before the old man could answer, there was a quick sound of feet in the passage, and Laura de Montreuil entered, leading Amy by the hand.

When the proud girl saw her brother, she stopped short and drew a sharp breath, but directly her eyes fell upon Benedict with a clear, stern light that pierced through his audacious self-possession.

"Sir," she said, with grand self-possession, "look upon this fair creature, and then, if you can, refuse the redress I have come to demand."

Arnold cast a withering glance at Amy, but she bore it gently. He bent toward her and hissed through his shut teeth, "Is this the way you keep an oath, traitress?"

Amy drew back briefly saying, "It is kept." He gained a little courage at this, and, approaching Laura, would have taken her hand, but she stepped back rebuking him like a queen.

"Let me speak with you one moment alone," he pleaded.

"When this lady is your wife, never till then."

"Laura, do you, can you cast me off, because a jealous girl pursues me with accusations that are false?"

"She false! Look at her, is that a face to doubt?"

"You never loved me, Laura, or this person would have no power to change you so."

She silenced him with an imperious gesture.

"Remember," he said, drawing so close that his breath swept her cheek, "the ceremony of to-morrow night. Nothing can prevent it. Why expose your delicacy by this public scene?"

His breath made Laura faint, she turned away dizzy and pale.

"Go home and let me settle this," he urged, triumphing in her emotion. "Paul, Paul de Montreuil, take your sister home, she is excited, I have been cruelly maligned to her. Dear Laura, I entreat you go home. In the morning I will explain."

Laura called back her strength, the red pride flashed into her cheeks again. She turned to her brother, who came up greatly agitated, the scene had taken him completely by surprise.

"Paul, Paul, let us go away. This man—oh! Paul, this man——"

She could not finish the sentence. All the anguish and pride of her nature rose up and overpowered the words.

"What is this? Give me some explanation," said Paul, with dignity. "Is it that you have refused to marry this gentleman?"

"Yes, brother, I refuse."

"Beware, Laura, or I may take you at your word," whispered Arnold.

She regarded him for a moment with lofty pride; then turning to her brother, she said,

"Yes, Paul, I do most solemnly refuse to marry this bad man."

"And you mean this?" whispered Arnold.

She did not answer him, but looked at her brother.

"There will be a wedding to-morrow night, and at your house, Paul; but the bride is changed. See, I have dragged my wedding dress through the streets in dust and dew. Hers shall be pure and white as snow. She gave me life, I give her—oh! Paul, Paul, take me home."

"One word more," said Arnold, fiercely. "Do you, Laura de Montreuil, break our engagement here and forever?"

"Now and forever!" she answered, solemnly.

"And you wish me to marry this girl, Amy Leonard, at your brother's house to-morrow night?"

"I do!"

She was pale as marble, and her voice seemed passing over ice.

He laughed, a fierce, mocking laugh, turned carelessly away and threw his arm over Amy's shoulder.

"It is quite unnecessary, we have been married, Amy Leonard and I, more than a year. Look up, little wife, and tell this lady if I speak the truth."

Had a cannon ball fallen in the midst of that room it could not have created greater consternation. Every face was pale, every tongue was silent; Arnold alone retained his self-possession. He would have drawn Amy to his side for the brutal pleasure of wounding her rival, but the delicate young creature shrunk weeping from his caress. Paul took his outraged sister by the hand, his face was stern as death; for the time, he forgot everything else in the outrage that had been offered to his sister, his proud, beautiful sister.

"To-morrow," he said, with cold scorn in his voice, "I shall demand an explanation."

"It is here," said Arnold, laughing hoarsely, "and a fair one surely. Of course a man with one wife cannot marry another, fond as ladies become at times. There is but one explanation. I am married to this pretty little soul, and consequently must decline acting at any other ceremony. My good father has been greatly exercised about my matrimonial plans of late, I hope he is satisfied now. As for my sister——"

He looked around, as he spoke, with a pang of natural compassion for the breaking up of that young life, but the eyes which he expected to meet, full of reproaches, were closed. Hannah in attempting to leave the sofa, where she

had sat that evening with Paul, had fainted dead away. She had fallen like a corpse among the crimson cushions, a broken-hearted woman from that hour to the end of her life.

Paul cast one agonized look on her cold face, and, taking his sister's arm, left the house filled with stern wrath.

After they were gone, Arnold turned to his father: "Now, sir, while my sister is senseless and my mother away, let us end this scene forever. This young person is my legally married wife. I acknowledge her as such before the whole world—the more willingly because I know it will torture the haughty vixen who has just left us. Tell your deacons and our good neighbors in Norwich that they must carry their church discipline somewhere else. *My wife* is no subject for it. As for the old folks at the saw-mill, tell them that in forcing a wife upon me before I was ready to claim her, they have lost a daughter. Now, Amy, child, see if anything can be done for this poor girl. What a pity it is that so many complications arise in an affair of this kind! Now, father, I hope you are satisfied. So, while Amy attends to Hannah, suppose we find my mother. Dear old soul she will be glad to hear the news."

The insolent son and heavy-hearted father went out together, leaving Amy with her newly found sister, whose heart had broken as she fell

away into insensibility—broken, as women's hearts can break, with a long burden of life vital in them still.

Mrs. Arnold, that pure and gentle soul, met her son with placid joy. She was told that Amy had been openly recognized as his wife, and never knew of the painful scene which we have described, for no one had the heart to enlighten her.

The next day the Arnolds returned to their home; but Amy, poor, lonely, heavy-hearted Amy was left behind with her husband, punished, oh! how bitterly, for her first great sin of concealment and disobedience.

Two days after this Paul de Montreuil and his sister left New Haven and America. How Laura managed to appease the stern wrath of her brother, no one ever knew but Arnold. And he never met them again. Years after this, Laura de Montreuil, the most lovely and coldly beautiful woman at the Court of France, fainted in the presence of the queen and all her ladies, when the great political treason of Benedict Arnold first left its infamy on the American name. But long before that, his gentle wife, Amy, lay in the grave-yard behind the church where the old gray-headed parents still reverently worshipped. A little way off were two other graves, where the parents of Benedict Arnold slept the sleep of the righteous.